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Illustrations

Abbreviations

Preface

THE TRADE

OF

REVOLUTIONARY CONNECTICUT

A DISSERTATION

IN HISTORY

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN

PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ALBERT EDWARD VAN DUSEN

PHILADELPHIA

1943

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C. M. C. -- Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society.

General -- The Connecticut State Library.

Journal -- The Journal of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Map -- Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Plan -- The Connecticut State Library.

Sketch -- The Connecticut State Library.

Table -- The Connecticut State Library.

Abbreviations Employed in Footnotes

- A. R. W. -- Archives, Revolutionary War, series 1.
- A. T. P. -- Archives, Trumbull Papers.
- C. C. -- The Connecticut Courant.
- C. C. S. -- Connecticut as a Colony and a State, Richard Purcell.
- C. R. -- Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut.
- C. H. S. C. -- Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society.
- Gazette -- The Connecticut Gazette.
- Journal -- The Connecticut Journal.
- M. H. S. C. -- Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.
- Packet -- The Norwich Packet.
- S. R. -- Public Records of the State of Connecticut.
- W. G. W. -- The Writings of George Washington.

in the late colonial period. Preface Part I and Part II trade are
concluded in broad terms as summarizing the period. Importantly for

The history of Connecticut during the Revolution has offered a
virtually untapped field for exploration and treatment. Both earlier
and later periods have been the subject of intensive investigation by
such highly competent scholars as Charles M. Andrews, Richard Purcell
and Jarvis M. Morse. Aside from a handful of specialized works on
very narrow phases of Connecticut's revolutionary story, such as
Middlebrook's useful History of Maritime Connecticut during the Ameri-
can Revolution, essentially a naval not a commercial history, no im-
portant studies have appeared yet on the larger phases of the subject.

The manuscript and printed sources available for study are impres-
sively rich, especially the collections at the Connecticut State Library
and the Connecticut Historical Society; and for the most part these
collections are readily accessible and useable.

A complete and definitive history of Revolutionary Connecticut
would entail many years of preparation and probably four or five vol-
umes of careful writing to do the subject justice. Even a complete
economic history of the period would necessitate a much longer work
than this study.

The author has attempted to present with a moderate amount of il-
lustrative data most of the essential elements in the story of Connecti-
cut's trade from the 1760's through 1783. In Part I attention has been
centered upon two features: in first place, the broad background of
physical setting, population, transportation and communication, agri-
culture, manufacturing and political organization; against this back-
ground, in second place, the characteristics of Connecticut's trade

in the late colonial period. Both in Part I and Part II trade has been conceived of in broad terms as something involving importantly far more people than those in the small group called "merchants." To an important extent practically every Connecticut farmer, and this meant most adult males, was a "trader" who had surplus produce to sell for cash, or to exchange for all sorts of other goods.

In Part II a more detailed treatment has been given to trade during the war period. Much descriptive material has been prepared, and an attempt made to evaluate the impact of the war upon various groups, individuals, and sections. Considerable attention has been devoted to the role of Connecticut as the "Supply" or "Provision" State. The amount of source material available upon this topic is so vast, including huge unindexed collections such as the Wadsworth Papers, that the chapter dealing with this whole problem should be considered only as a summary of findings based upon an exploratory expedition rather than as an exhaustive one. For most other topics in Part II it has been possible to examine most of the available source material, and form more definite conclusions.

The problems of regulatory legislation, its enforcement, and its effects has been carefully studied. Unfortunately it is virtually impossible to measure with any degree of mathematical precision such things. Much suggestive data has been presented, but in most cases it has seemed wiser to avoid drawing any sweeping conclusions from this data.

The author has carried his investigations far enough to feel convinced that Connecticut's economic history in the revolutionary era comprises a very significant chapter in the larger American picture.

The author is under deep obligation to many persons and institutions for help in this project. The possibility of journeying into this virgin territory of history was first suggested to him by Professor George M. Dutcher of Wesleyan University during the author's undergraduate days. Since that time Professor Dutcher's interest in the project has never flagged, and he has given freely of his time and energies. He read almost all of the manuscript and suggested many improvements.

Official direction of the work at the University of Pennsylvania was assumed first by Dr. Richard H. Shryock. He has been most helpful throughout the period of preparation which was greatly broken up by the events of the war period. In September, 1946 Dr. Roy F. Nichols took over the general supervision, and under his wise guidance it was at last completed. The author's debt to these three men is so great as to be difficult of expression, for their friendly counsel and encouragement played a vital role in ensuring the completion of the project. During the author's five years at Duke University, Dr. William T. Laprade, Chairman of the History Department, gave assistance in several ways to the furtherance of research efforts.

The courteous cooperation received at many libraries greatly facilitated the pleasureable experience of digging into manuscripts and printed collections. At the Connecticut State Library, the richest manuscript storehouse for Connecticut history, Mr. James Brewster, Librarian, and Miss Marjorie Case of the staff, repeatedly went out of their way to assist in every possible manner; and the author's debt to them is particularly large. Mr. Thompson R. Harlow, librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society, and his assistant, Miss Frances A.

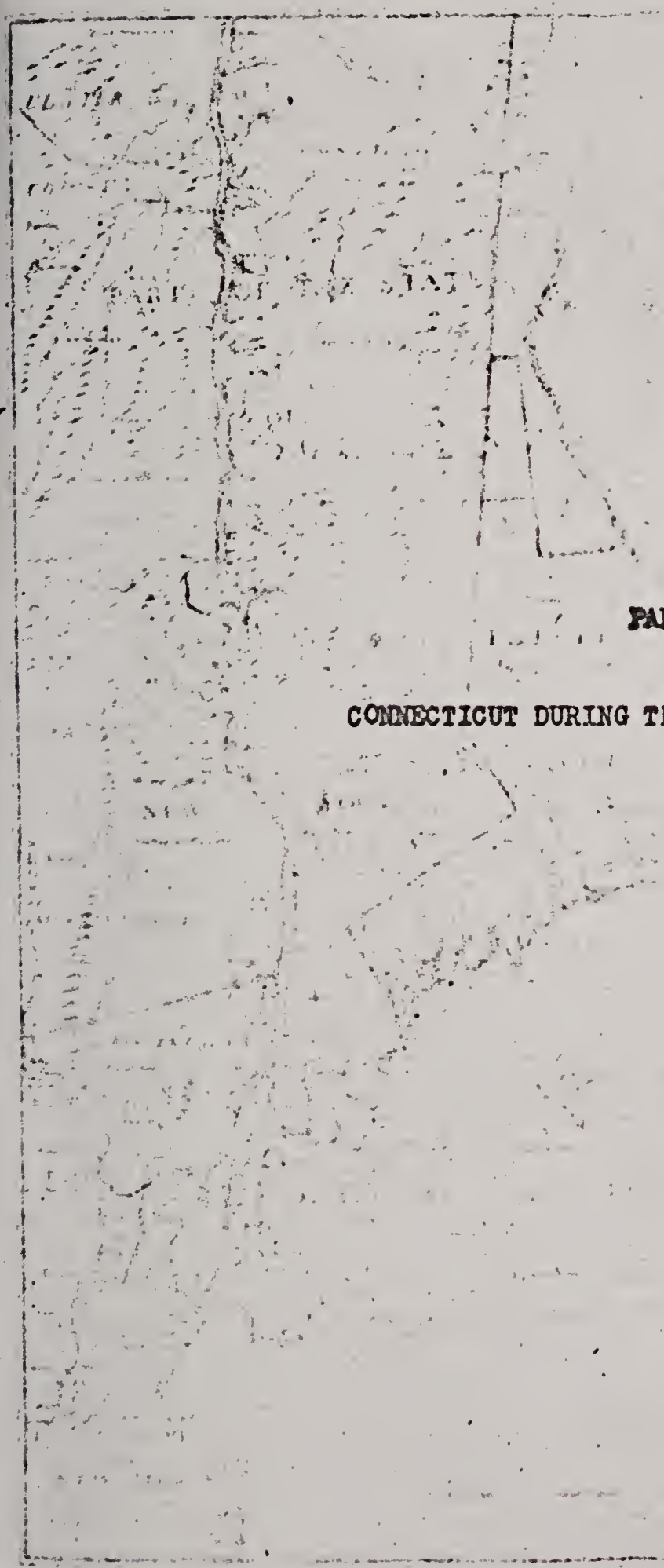
Hoxie, willingly and graciously gave much time and effort in steering the author to the most useful collections for this study. At Sterling Library Mrs. Zera Powers of the Connecticut Room courteously extended every assistance possible in making available pertinent manuscript collections. The Library Committee of Sterling Library at Yale kindly gave permission to use and quote from the portions of the Shaw Papers and from all account books and other manuscripts listed in the bibliography as being from Yale Library. Miss Allene Ramage and Miss Helen Oylar of the staff of Duke Library gave very real help to the author.

The author is, in addition, indebted to members of the staffs of the following institutions and libraries for valuable assistance: the Massachusetts Historical Society, Baker and Houghton Libraries of Harvard University, the American Antiquarian Society, the New York Public Library, the Business Library of Columbia University, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Library of the University of North Carolina, the Department of Historical Records and Archives of the State of North Carolina, the Litchfield Historical Society, the New Haven Historical Society, the United States Customs at New Haven, the New London Historical Society, and the Clerk's Office of the City of Middletown.

The author has received from his colleague, Dr. Sam Hugh Brockunier, various kinds of help which expedited research and writing. The Faculty Research Committee and the Trustees of Wesleyan University have aided the project greatly by two substantial research grants during the school years 1946-47 and 1947-48. Miss Marilyn Kwanyuskas, secretary of the History Department, performed the important task of typing the

preliminary and final drafts. Dr. Leonard Labaree of Yale University made several useful suggestions regarding research. Dr. Arthur C. Bining read a preliminary draft of the work and contributed a number of excellent suggestions for improvement.

Last, but not least, the author owes to his wife the contribution of untold hours of cheerful assistance in many phases of the work. Without her practical help and loyal encouragement the project could not have been pushed to completion at this time.



PART I

CONNECTICUT DURING THE LATE COLONIAL PERIOD



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CHAPTER I

Geographic Features of Connecticut

The natural features of Connecticut looked very much the same in the eighteenth century as they do today. Then as now Connecticut was small, hilly, heavily-forested, and picturesque.

Of the thirteen colonies soon to be organized as the United States only two, Rhode Island and Delaware, were smaller. Connecticut, excluding its western land claims, was approximately 5000 square miles in area, extending from $41^{\circ} 10'$ to $42^{\circ} 2'$ north latitude, and from $71^{\circ} 48'$ to $72^{\circ} 41'$ east longitude. The eastern boundary with Rhode Island extends about fifty miles; the western with New York, about ninety; the northern with Massachusetts, about eighty-seven; and the Sound boundary, about one-hundred.¹

In terrain, Connecticut is very varied. Three main zones may be listed: the coastal plain, rather narrow and flat; the river valleys--particularly the Connecticut, Housatonic (Kongatuck), and Thames--all low in altitude; and the interior highland regions, hilly to mountainous, ranging up to an average altitude of about one thousand feet along the northern line, and punctuated by high ridges and occasional small peaks.

The best soil is found in the central valley, drained by the Connecticut River, as far south as Middletown. Below Middletown the River leaves the Valley which continues southwesterly to New Haven. The deep, rich, alluvial soil of the valley, ranging from a fine loam to a stiff

¹

The boundary on the Sound is measured by air line.

clay² affords excellent crops after three hundred years of constant use by white men. Little wonder that eighteenth-century travelers generally commented upon the prosperous and attractive appearance of the central valley!³ In his Journal the French Army Commissary, Claude Blanchard, noted: "The environs [of Hartford] are fertile, especially the banks of the river, where good pasturage is found."⁴ The width of the valley runs from ten to sixteen miles, and it is far from being level, as small hills dot its surface.

For the colony as a whole, the soil cannot be classified as good. The uplands generally are rocky with thin soil. The many streams emptying into the major valleys have carried down much humus and have caused a continuous loss of fertility from the higher lands.

The terrain of Connecticut is gently undulating for the most part. It occupies about one half of the southern part of the New England peninsula. From the Sound the land rises slowly at the rate of about twenty feet to the mile to 1000 feet altitude at the Massachusetts line. The coastal lowland ranging up to 100 feet altitude is narrow—fifteen miles at the Rhode Island line, and only five miles at New Haven. Within the lowland areas, both coastal and river valley, small but striking elevations stand out, such as East and West Rock at New Haven; and the Hanging Hills of Meriden, dominated by West Peak.

²Albert L. Olson, Agricultural Economy and the Population in Eighteenth Century Connecticut (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 40), p. 1.

³Good meadow land in Hartford county, for example, was assessed in 1778 at 15 shillings per acre as compared with 7 shillings 6 pence elsewhere. S. R. II, 14.

⁴Thomas Balch, The Journal of Claude Blanchard (Albany, 1876), p. 110.

These are volcanic trap peaks whose bedrock resisted erosion. The summits ranging up to 892 feet on Mt. Higby and 1007 feet on West Peak, Meriden, roughly equal in elevation the upland levels east and west of the central lowland region. The two distinct series of hills in Connecticut are often called the eastern and western highlands.⁵

The most striking mountainous areas lie in the northwest. Numerous peaks there rise above 1500 feet, including Mohawk Mt. (1680) in Cornwall, Haystack Mt. (1680) and Ball Mt. (1760) in Norfolk, and Bradford Mt. (1927) in Canaan. Salisbury takes the altitude honors with impressive Bear Mt., which reaches 2355 feet, towering some 1600 feet above Twin Lakes in the valley to the East. By contrast, the highest point east of the Connecticut River, Bald Hill in Union, attains an altitude of only 1286 feet.

Connecticut has been favored with ample water resources. Besides the three great river systems, about 1000 lakes, mostly glacial in origin, and covering 44,000 acres, dot its surface. The principal lakes are Bantam, Gardner, Pocotopaug, Twin and Waramaug.⁶

Among the rivers which flow a total of 7600 miles in Connecticut, three deserve chief attention. By far the most important is the Connecticut, navigable over 60 miles from the Sound to Hartford. Its chief tributaries are the Farmington River and the Salmon River. Besides being the most important river, it is also the largest—in width ranging from about 550 feet near South Wethersfield to about three miles just

⁵ William North Rice and Wilbur Garland Foye, Guide to the Geology of Middletown, Connecticut, and Vicinity, (Hartford, 1927), pp. 12-13.

⁶ Present-day Candlewood and Zeor are artificial.

above the mouth.⁷ Since the Connecticut has a tremendous watershed in New Hampshire and Vermont, an area of heavy rain and snowfall, it periodically goes upon rampages, flooding large areas each spring, occasionally with heavy damage. At the same time it fertilizes well the lowland flooded areas. Actually the Connecticut drains only a small part of the Colony (State), the northern part of the lowlands, while most of the remainder is drained by the Housatonic—Haugatuck system for the western highlands and the Thames system (Yantic, Shetucket and Quinebaug Rivers) for the eastern highlands. The Thames is navigable to Norwich; the Housatonic, to Derby.

Floods must have been frequent in all of the larger rivers of Connecticut, for the Colonial Records contain frequent references to petitions for aid in rebuilding bridges washed away by spring freshets and floods.⁸

Despite the flood losses and the inconveniences experienced in crossing the rivers, by and large they constituted an important economic asset to the people. The fishing was excellent, especially for salmon, in the Connecticut River. In an age when land transportation was primitive, the rivers and lakes served as principal arteries of commerce and communication.⁹ Every important stream in Connecticut has its fall line within the State which means an abundance of available waterpower. To a small extent this power was harnessed for grist mills and the like,

⁷ The Narrows below Middletown are only about 600 feet wide.

⁸ See C. R. XIII, 343 (Farmington River), XIII, 631, (Shetucket River); XIII, 605 (Farmington River), as examples.

⁹ See pp. 54-56.

even in colonial times. The Housatonic offered an unusually large number of fine mill sites at its numerous waterfalls.

Like other colonies east of the Mississippi, Connecticut was originally covered with dense forests. As elsewhere the colonists waged relentless war against the forest cover. Despite this, the stand of timber remaining in Connecticut at the end of the colonial period was still very large.¹⁰

The common natural woods were maple, oak, ash, hickory, birch, elm, sassafras, whitewood, poplar, pepperidge, sycamore, beech, walnut, wild cherry, butternut, chestnut, basswood, pine, hemlock, cedar, balsam, and spruce.¹¹ Of these trees the oak, pine, and whitewood ranked particularly high in economic value.¹²

The rugged woodlands overspread much of Litchfield County, southern Hartford and western New London (now Middlesex) counties, and northern Windham County (now partly in Tolland County). Heavily forest-covered towns included Norfolk, Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Torrington, Granby, Hartland, Bethany, Prospect, Killingworth, Essex, Madison, Saybrook, Haddam, East Haddam, Chatham (East Hampton), Marlboro, Tolland, Willington, Union, Ashford, Sterling, Eastford, and Voluntown, where today over sixty percent of the land area is wooded.¹³

The fauna of Connecticut in the eighteenth century was quite

¹⁰

In 1937 about fifty-six percent of the state was forested according to Federal Writers Project, Guide to Connecticut, p. 10.

¹¹

Benjamin Trumbull, History of Connecticut (New London, 1898) I, 19.

¹²

Ibid., p. 19; Theodore Dwight, History of Connecticut (New York, 1841), I, 36, 39.

¹³

Olson, pp. 5-6.

diverse. Deer, bear, moose, fox, mink, raccoon, muskrat, otter, wolf, and wild-cat all thrived. Turkey, heron, partridge, pigeon and quail provided a hunter's paradise. Some of the animals, especially the wolf, bear, fox, and wild cat, caused damage to livestock. A persistent campaign against wolves largely wiped them out, and the others were brought under control.

In the realm of bird life, Connecticut was unique among the New England States for its representation in three faunal life zones--the upper austral, transition, and Canadian. In addition, the Colony lay on the edge of the great flyway from Canada to points southward and back again. Game birds were very numerous, including duck and ruffed grouse. Only the predatory hawks clouded the bright picture.¹⁴

From a mineralogical viewpoint Connecticut was varied but unimportant.¹⁵ There were, in fact, few colonies where minerals lay so freely exposed, and were so valueless. Mining of cobalt, copper, iron and lead, and quarrying of stone for building purposes were all carried on.¹⁶

Connecticut has a drowned coast so that good harbors are the rule. By all odds, New London possesses the finest harbor. New Haven ranks next in size and importance. In 1773 the Board of Trade asked for a description of the principal harbours. They received this answer:¹⁷

¹⁴ Trumbull, I, 20-21.

¹⁵ See John Frank Schairer, The Minerals of Connecticut (Hartford, 1931), for an excellent account of the mineral resources of Connecticut.

¹⁶ See pp. 93-96 for additional details.

¹⁷ C. R. XIV, 497.

10 "The principal Harbours are, New London, and New-Haven: The former opens to the South; from the Light-House at the Mouth of the Harbour, to the Town, is about three Miles, the Breadth three-quarters of a Mile, and in some Places more;—from five to six Fathoms Water,—a clear Bottom—tough Coze—and as far up as one Mile above the Town entirely secure and commodious for large Ships: The latter [New Haven] is situated North and South; half a Mile wide at the Entrance,—from thence to the Town four Miles—having two Fathom and one Half at low Water, and three Fathom and four Feet at common Tides, and very good Anchorage."

The magnificent harbor at New London was indeed more than adequate for all needs. Other ports of importance on the Sound (from West to East) were Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield, Startford, Milford, Branford, Guilford, Clinton, Saybrook, South and East Lyme, Mystic, and Stonington.

Connecticut's climate, then as now, was changeable and of moderate severity. Although Connecticut lies on the sea coast, its climate is of the continental type because the prevailing winds come from the great land masses to the north, northwest and southwest.¹⁸ The worst storms of eastern North America usually pass either to the north or south of Connecticut. Occasionally, however, storms from the northwest and southwest coalesce over Connecticut and deluge it with a violent and heavy rain or snow storm. As a rule, two mild storms strike Connecticut weekly, but a good two-thirds of the days are either clear or partly clear.¹⁹

For a State so small, Connecticut displays remarkable differences

¹⁸ Joseph Milton Kirk, The Weather and Climate of Connecticut, (Hartford, 1931), p. 14. An exception to the rule is the prevalence of cooling ocean winds from the south over southern Connecticut during long periods of the summer.

¹⁹

Ibid., pp. 14-15.

locally in weather, due mostly to surface variations. The mean annual temperature ranges from 50° F. along the Coast to 46° F. in the highlands of Litchfield County.

Excessively hot temperatures occur occasionally in the summer, chiefly in the towns and cities located at low altitudes.²⁰ Connecticut winters are mild compared to those of her northern neighbors, though at times, severe. Freezing weather usually prevails from about mid-November to early April. Rarely does the thermometer go below zero F., and very rarely, below -15° F.²¹

The length of the growing season is a factor of great significance to the farmer. It ranges from 190 days on the coast down to 140 days or less at some inland points. The length at selected towns in different sections is as follows: New Haven, Guilford, Saybrook and Stonington—190; Milford, Essex, New London, Hartford and Wethersfield—180; Middletown, Glastonbury, Somers, Fairfield, East Haddam, Farmington and Granby—170; Kent, Woodbury, Southington, Barkhamsted, Lebanon, Mansfield, Ashford and Union—160; Cornwall, Litchfield, Colebrook, Preston, Plainfield and Killingly—150; and Norfolk, Canaan, Salisbury, and Voluntown—140, or less.²² The markedly longer growing season of the Coast and of the Connecticut River Valley is conspicuous and helps explain prosperous, colonial, agricultural developments there.

²⁰Waterbury experienced the highest on record, 105° , in 1926. On the average Hartford has eight days of 90° plus temperature yearly, and New Haven, four. Kirk, p. 16.

²¹Kirk, pp. 16-17. The record is -29° F. at Voluntown in 1904.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 19. Great variations occur from year to year. In 1947 the growing season at Middletown totalled only 130 days (May 10-September 26), far below average.

Connecticut apparently nearly always has enjoyed ample precipitation. Rainfall averages approximately forty-five inches annually, with the western highlands slightly greater, and the Connecticut and Thames Valleys slightly below the average. Snowfall ranges from about thirty-five inches yearly on the coast to seventy-five inches in Litchfield County.²³ A moderate snowfall with cold weather actually was a boon, in part, in colonial days, for it made possible transportation of persons and goods by sleds and sledges. When the roads thawed, they often became impassable for weeks on end.

Perhaps the most unpleasant feature of Connecticut weather, aside from its fickleness, is its dampness. The humidity is high much of the time, especially in the coastal and Connecticut Valley areas.²⁴

Very little information is available upon the weather in Connecticut during the Revolutionary War. It was, however, probably fairly normal, since people then as now, chiefly recorded abnormalities. The chief exception to normalcy was the winter of 1779-80, memorable for tremendous snowfalls and very cold weather. For example, Long Island Sound froze all the way across, and people rode over to Long Island from Stratford and elsewhere.²⁵ The rigorous winter coincided with a low point in American fortunes, and it must have added greatly to the gloom in

²³ Ibid., pp. 21, 23.

²⁴ See table in Kirk, p. 24. Average annual humidity at New Haven is 74 percent (8 A.M.), 65 (noon), 71 (8 P.M.); at Hartford, 75, 60, and 67 respectively. Summer and fall are the most humid seasons; the spring, the driest.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 33. Another exception was the great northeast storm which hit the state on August 18, 1778 and caused extensive damage to homes, forests, crops, and shipping. Dwight, I, 73.

Connecticut.²⁶

The climatic conditions of Connecticut, by and large, therefore, were favorable to the life and economic activities of the eighteenth-century populace. The changeableness of the weather, though often heartily damned then as now, did have a generally invigorating and energizing effect upon the people.

As a result of the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776 the population of Connecticut showed a steady and rapid increase. An indication of the rapid increase in the population of the state is the fact that the population of the state in 1790 was 230,000, and in 1800 it was 250,000.

During the early part of the century the population of the state was still increasing, and the population of the state in 1820 was 270,000. The population of the state in 1830 was 290,000, and in 1840 it was 310,000. The population of the state in 1850 was 330,000, and in 1860 it was 350,000. The population of the state in 1870 was 370,000, and in 1880 it was 390,000. The population of the state in 1890 was 410,000, and in 1900 it was 430,000.

The population of the state in 1910 was 450,000, and in 1920 it was 470,000. The population of the state in 1930 was 490,000, and in 1940 it was 510,000. The population of the state in 1950 was 530,000, and in 1960 it was 550,000. The population of the state in 1970 was 570,000, and in 1980 it was 590,000. The population of the state in 1990 was 610,000, and in 2000 it was 630,000.

²⁶ Jedidiah Strong, Clerk of the Lower House, entered this comment in the Journal of the House under the date of May 19, 1780: "After the severest hard winter within the memory of man, distinguished not only by the abundance of snow and frequent storms of the most tedious sort but also the extreme degrees and long continuance of cold—amidst the most backward spring recollected by aged and observing citizens, and whilst the horrors of an unnatural war are increased amazingly and increasing perpetually...." S. R. III, 3 ftn.

CHAPTER II

Population

1. Introduction

From the first permanent English settlements in the 1633-36 period to the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775 the population of Connecticut showed a steady and rapid rate of growth. An understanding of the basic factors regarding this population growth is essential to a study of Connecticut's trade.

During the entire Colonial period only two censuses were taken in Connecticut, those of 1756 and 1774. For the revolutionary period one can cite only one census, that of 1782. This study will be built around a presentation and analysis of these censuses supplemented by some attention to the earlier period.

For the entire period before 1758 one is forced by the absence of any census to employ other means to get any meaningful estimates of population. These ratios have been found useful:

<u>Form</u>	<u>Ratio to Total Population</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Militia	1 to 5	Recommended by Greene and Harrington ¹
Polls, Taxables	1 to 4	In Connecticut, men 21 and over
Families	1 to (nearly) 6	By 1790 census, actual figure was 1 to 5.7
Houses	1 to 7	Greene and Harrington's belief ²

¹ E. B. Greene and V. D. Harrington, Population in American Colonies, xxiii.

² Ibid.

Upon these bases most of the estimates of colonial population have been worked out. Obviously, a large margin of error is likely.

2. Estimates for colonial period

Some of the principal and more reliable population estimates for Colonial Connecticut are as follows:

- 1638 -- 800 persons, according to Trumbull³
- 1640 -- 2000⁴
- 1655 -- 4000 (based upon 775 taxables)⁵
- 1674 -- 10,350 (based upon Trumbull's statement of 2070 militia)⁶
- 1677 -- 11,810 (based upon 2362 men in militia)⁷
- 1685 -- 13,284 (based upon 3321 taxables)⁸
- 1701 -- 30,000⁹
- 1713 -- 47,500¹⁰
- 1730 -- 38,700¹¹
- 1756 -- 130,612¹²

³ Benjamin Trumbull, I, 46. Adams accepts this estimate. See his Founding of New England, p. 19.

⁴ James Truslow Adams, Founding of New England, p. 19.

⁵ Trumbull, I, 184. The ratio of taxables was probably very low then. Dexter in "Estimates of Population in the American Colonies," Proceedings of American Antiquarian Society, V, 32, asserts that 4000 to 5000 is correct.

⁶ Trumbull, I, 272.

⁷ Greene and Harrington, p. 47.

⁸ Governor Andros to the Secretary of State in C. R. IV, 149-150.

⁹ Greene and Harrington, p. 48.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

¹¹ Secretary Wyll's "Answer to Queries of the Board of Trade" in C. R. VII, 584. Probably much too low.

¹² C. R. XIV, 492. Official census figures with slight correction.

1762 -- 148,500¹³
 1774 -- 197,910¹⁴

Yearly Per Cent Increase in Pop. 1690-1774

Good evidence exists that the early estimates tend to be low. For example, the 1750 figure of 38,000 reported to the Board of Trade probably represents only about two-thirds of the actual number.¹⁵

The author's estimate on population in the colonial period is based on the belief that the population doubled every twenty-five years. The 1774 census is taken as the most reliable guide-post from which to calculate.

1649 -- 6,200¹⁶
 1674 -- 12,400
 1699 -- 24,700
 1724 -- 49,500
 1749 -- 99,000
 1774 -- 197,910 (census)

Earlier than 1649 the only reliable estimate appears to be that of Trumbull of 800 persons for 1636.

To obtain an idea of the rate of growth in the colonial period this table is useful:¹⁷

¹³ C. R. XI, 630. Another answer to the Board of Trade. Probably, low.

¹⁴ C. R. XIV, 483-491. Again census figures with slight corrections.

¹⁵ Dexter, loc. cit., 32.

¹⁶ All figures to nearest one hundred. Other estimates for these years include: 1649--5000 capable of arms; 1674--2070 men in militia [Trumbull, I, 273]; 1699--3705 taxables; 1724--none; 1749--71,500 in Answers to Queries (undoubtedly, quite low).

¹⁷ Based on graph in Olson's Agricultural Economy and the Population in Eighteenth Century Connecticut, p. 21, adapted from Dexter's "Estimates of Population," p. 33.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Yearly Per Cent Increase in Each Period of</u>
1690	20,000	
1730	60,000	5.0 (1690-1730)
1749	100,000	2.5 (1730-49)
1756	130,612	4.4 (1749-56)
1774	197,910	2.9 (1756-74)
1782	208,850	.8 (1774-82)

Connecticut's rate of growth apparently reached a peak around the middle of the eighteenth century after which it declined noticeably. This slowing down can be accounted for largely in terms of (1) great acceleration of emigration and (2) diminution of immigration. The first involved especially large movements of people to such places as western Massachusetts, New Hampshire and the future Vermont.¹⁸

3. The 1774 Census

Connecticut's first carefully-made census, that of 1774, affords a contrast to the elaborate census taken in the twentieth-century United States. The facts called for were few—perhaps a wise move in view of the primitive means of transportation, lack of experienced census-takers and other difficulties. The machinery for the census was set in motion by the general assembly in October, 1773:

Resolved by this Assembly, That the selectmen in the respective towns in this Colony at or before the general election in May next shall take and transmit to his Honor the Governor a particular and exact account of all the persons in their respective towns, as well negroes and indians as white persons, distinguishing the number of those who are under the age of twenty years from those who are above that age, the sexes, and whether married or single; and that the colonel of each regiment of militia shall also within the time

¹⁸ R. L. Morrow, Connecticut Influences in Western Massachusetts and Vermont, (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 58), passim.

aforesaid transmit to his Honor the Governor the exact number of officers and soldiers in his said regiment, thereby to enable his Honor to prepare a compleat answer to a letter lately received from the Earl of Dartmouth, his Majesty's Secretary of State for the American department. And that this act be forthwith printed and distributed by the Representatives in the present Assembly.¹⁹

The total population of Connecticut in 1774 was, therefore, 197,910, which represented a gain of 67,298 over the 1756 total.

One may study the census returns from many angles such as distribution by age groups, counties, reference to topography, towns, sections as divided by the Connecticut River, and minority groups. The last-mentioned will be considered separately at the end.²¹

In regard to the distribution by age group one finds that it is very similar in the five older, more settled counties, but in Litchfield, the youngest county, a variation is evident. A comparison may suitably be made with New Haven county:

<u>County</u>	<u>Children under 10</u>	<u>Males 20-70</u>	<u>Females 20-70</u>	<u>Whites over 70</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
New Haven	8194	5535	5551	568	26819
Litchfield	9171	5478	4954	390	27345

In other words, Litchfield possessed a younger population with more children, a disproportionate number of young men, and considerably fewer old folks—all typical of a frontier area.

To emphasize the relative growth by counties these figures should be considered:

	<u>1756 Total Population</u>	<u>1774 Total Population</u>	<u>Percentage of Increase</u>
Hartford	36,566	51,890	42
New Haven	18,181	26,819	48
New London	23,461	33,578	43
Fairfield	20,560	30,150	47
Windham	20,015	28,128	41
Litchfield	11,827	27,345	131
	<u>130,612</u>	<u>197,910</u>	<u>51.5</u>

It is apparent that population was increasing at a moderate and fairly uniform rate in the five older counties. But in Litchfield the rate was almost exactly three times as great! In eighteen years Litchfield had registered a gain of one and one-third times her 1756 population.

The distribution of population in Connecticut at the outbreak of the Revolution was markedly uneven. The area of densest population spread along the coast with offshoots spreading from Stratford up the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers to Waterbury, from New Haven northeast to the Connecticut River Valley at Middletown and thence up the River to the Massachusetts Line, and from New London northward up the Thames River to Norwich. It is interesting to note that eleven of the twelve most populous towns fall within this fairly narrow area. Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, New Haven, New London and Stonington lie in the coastal area, while Wallingford lies on the New Haven-Middletown line. Middletown and Hartford are located on the Connecticut River; and Farmington, the only exception, adjacent to Hartford on the west, is on the Farmington River, an important tributary of the Connecticut. New London is at the mouth of the Thames with Norwich on its upper waters. Woodbury was bounded in part by the Housatonic River, so that it, too, essentially fitted into the pattern.

The remainder of the colony ranged from moderate to sparse population density due to such factors as hilly or mountainous terrain, poor soil, lack of good water transportation, later settlement, and other reasons.

Yet Connecticut seems to have been suffering already from a land subsistence problem. Under the backward type of agricultural economy prevailing then, much of the Colony could not support any larger population. As families grew, and the amount of land available remained

fixed, the alternative arose of a lower standard of living or emigration.²²

After the Revolution, especially in the nineteenth century, manufactures were developed on a larger scale, but no such outlet existed prior to the Revolution. Furthermore, land values rose steadily in the eighteenth-century and land became too expensive for many young men to buy.²³

Large families were the rule in Colonial Connecticut. Travelers often noticed "ten or twelve little heads peeping out of doors and windows."²⁴ An unknown writer commented: "Our lands are cleared and settled; our farms in general will not bear a further division; unless there be some new resource our most active, industrious and enterprising young men ... will emigrate to those parts of the continent where there is more vacant territory."²⁵

One may reveal fairly well the centers of power and wealth of the Colony by a brief view of the twelve leading towns in size in 1774. As a rough indication of relative wealth, the tax list for each is also given.

22

Olson, pp. 20-22. See Stella Sutherland, Population Distribution in Colonial America (New York, 1936), opp. p. 62 for a map showing excellently the distribution of population in Connecticut and the remainder of New England for 1776.

23

Olson, p. 11.

24

Ibid., p. 18.

25

Ibid.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>1774</u>	<u>1756</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u> ²⁶	<u>1774 Tax List</u> ²⁷	<u>Rank</u>
1	New Haven	8295	5085	63	72,395	1
2	Norwich	7327	5540	32	68,649	2
3	Farmington	6069	3707	64	67,519	3
4	New London	5888	3171	86	36,423	12
5	Stratford	5555	3658	52	52,000	5
6	Stonington	5412	3518	54	37,839	11
7	Woodbury	5313	2911	83	60,600	4
8	Hartford	5031	3027	66	49,036	8
9	Wallingford	4915	3713	32	51,051	6
10	Middletown ²⁸	4878	5664	-14	43,153	10
11	Fairfield	4863	4455	9	51,005	7
12	Norwalk	4388	3050	44	44,076	9

New London and Woodbury showed the greatest rate of population increase, while New Haven jumped from third to first place in total population. The wealthiest town per capita of list was Woodbury with Farmington a close second. Hartford, eighth in population and wealth, offered a marked contrast to its towering twentieth-century leadership in the State.

In view of the tendency of colonial political leaders to split on an East-of-the-River and West-of-the-River basis, especially during the Trumbull-Fitch rivalry of the 1769-75 period, it is interesting to note the relative population of the Colony in 1774 as divided by the Connecticut River. To the West of the River (conservative belt generally) approximately 115,529 people lived. On the East side (less conservative political leadership) approximately 82,381 people dwelt.²⁹ The percentage

²⁶ To the nearest per cent.

²⁷ To the nearest pound.

²⁸ Middletown's decline was due to the cutting off of a part for Chatham in 1767.

²⁹ Exact figures are impossible to get because several towns lay on both sides of the river, as Hartford and Middletown. However, Edgar L. Heermance, Preliminary Studies of Connecticut Population, 1756-1930, is useful on this point.

division was therefore: West—58.4 per cent, East—41.6. The preponderance of the West in numbers must have made it harder for Fitch's western group, the "Old Party," to accept the Eastern leadership of Trumbull and the New London-Windham County group.

4. Intra-colonial movements, 1700-1774

The fifty or sixty years preceding the Revolution were marked by a large intra-colonial population movement. During and after the end of Queen Anne's War (1713) a trek began to the remaining unsettled portions of Connecticut. By 1774 this movement had largely spent itself.

The older towns settled the new ones. Goshen was largely filled up by families from New Haven, Wallingford, Durham, Farmington, Simsbury and Litchfield; Sharon, from Colchester and Lebanon. The spread of settlement can be observed in the dates of incorporation of the new towns by the general assembly: 1711, Coventry and Newtown; 1712, New Milford; 1713, Pomfret; 1714, Ashford; 1715, Tolland; 1719, Voluntown and Litchfield; 1720, Bolton; 1726, Windham County created with 11 towns; 1727, Willington; 1734, East Haddam and Union. The last section to be settled was the northwestern section—later called Litchfield County. Harwinton was incorporated in 1731, New Hartford in 1738, Goshen, Canaan, Kent and Sharon in 1739, Salisbury in 1741, Norfolk in 1758, and Hartland in 1761. So by 1762 all the land of Connecticut was divided up into towns, though many new towns later were created from older ones (such as Chatham from Middletown in 1767). Altogether Connecticut had seventy-six organized towns at the outbreak of the Revolution.

The question of the proper mode for the settling of the "western

lands," the unsettled northwestern area of 1713, precipitated a considerable debate among colonial leaders. Finally a compromise was decided upon. The Colony was to dispose of the lands west of Litchfield, while certain patentees in Hartford and Windsor received the right to dispose of the land east of the line. In the latter, seven towns were established. Of these seven, Torrington, New Hartford, and Harwinton quickly prospered; but the other four—Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Hartland, and Winchester—grew slowly and painfully.³⁰ In 1756 they counted 18, 12, 0, and 24 inhabitants. By 1774 they numbered only 250, 150, 500, and 337 respectively.³¹ The wooded and rugged nature of the terrain has discouraged heavy settlement from then until the present.

The Colony quickly got rid of the western section of the "western lands" as the pressure had been heavy from herds of land-hungry petitioners to the general assembly.³² By the Act of 1737 seven townships were laid out along the Housatonic River and were sold at auction under prescribed conditions, with large bonds required.³³ The new towns created were Salisbury, Canaan, Norfolk, Goshen, Cornwall, Kent, and Sharon. Of these, Norfolk, made the slowest progress. According to the census figures one finds this record of growth to illustrate the filling up of Connecticut's last frontier:³⁴

³⁰ Dorothy Deming, Settlement of Litchfield County (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 6), pp. 1-4.

³¹ C. R. XIV, 490, 492.

³² Deming, p. 5ff.

³³ C. R. VIII, 134-137.

³⁴ C. R. XIV, 490, 492. The older, more populous towns of Litchfield, New Milford and Woodbury are omitted.

<u>Auction Town (Western) Group</u>	<u>1756</u>	<u>1774</u>
Sharon	1205	2012
Salisbury	1100	1980
Kent	1000	998
Canaan	1100	1635
Goshen	610	1111
Norfolk	84	969
Cornwall	500	974
	<u>5,599</u>	<u>10,677</u>

<u>Patentee (Eastern) Group</u>	<u>1746</u>	<u>1774</u>
Harwinton	250	1018
New Hartford	260	1001
Torrington	250	845
Hartland	12	500
Winchester	24	339
Barkhamsted	18	250
Colebrook	0	150
	<u>814</u>	<u>4,103</u>

With reference to natural resources it can be said that Litchfield County was fairly thickly settled by 1774.

In the later settlements land speculation played an important part. The settlement of Willington offers an example. A few families settled there about 1715-1720. In 1720 the entire area (seven miles by five) was sold by the Colony for £510 to seven men who apparently planned the whole project as a speculation. These proprietors succeeded in attracting "planters" from various parts of New England so that by 1728 there were twenty-eight rateable polls and a minister.³⁵ Undoubtedly the proprietors had sold their land at a good profit.

5. Emigration

Another major aspect of the population problem in the late colonial

³⁵ Louis K. Mathews [Rosenberry], The Expansion of New England, (Boston, 1909), 91-92.

period was that of migrations to areas outside Connecticut. As early as the 1640's settlers flowed across the Sound to Long Island. Soon after the Restoration in 1660 families from Branford, Guilford, and Milford moved to the site of modern Newark, New Jersey; and in 1697 a band of Connecticut pioneers founded Fairfield, New Jersey.³⁶ The series of colonial wars and the large areas of unsettled land in Connecticut, however, postponed any large-scale emigration until after Queen Anne's War. The period 1713-1764 (mainly between wars) saw a number of bands leaving Connecticut, especially for Berkshire County, Massachusetts. New Marlborough was settled in part by men from Canterbury and Suffield. To Sandisfield, went men from Enfield and Wethersfield; to Lenox, from West Hartford and Wallingford; to Otis, from Enfield, Suffield, Woodstock, Granby, and Hebron. Williamstown and Pittsfield were founded by Connecticut people.³⁷ The former town was settled largely by people from Colchester, Killingly, and Litchfield.³⁸

Other widely-scattered areas settled in part by Connecticut men prior to the French and Indian War included Putnam and Orange Counties in New York and the Midway tract in Georgia (1752).³⁹

The largest migration wave of the colonial era occurred in the decade or so after the French and Indian War. Connecticut men were prominent in the beginnings of Lee, New Ashford, Huntington, Hancock,

³⁶ Louis K. M. Rosenberry, Migrations from Connecticut Prior to 1800 (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 28), pp. 2-5.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 6, Morrow, p. 9.

³⁸ Morrow, p. 10.

³⁹ Rosenberry, p. 7.

Hinsdale, Cheshire, Adams, Windsor, and Richmond, all in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.⁴⁰

Many still more adventurous souls pushed onward into New Hampshire and helped in settling Marlow, Lebanon, Claremont, Hebron, Plainfield, Hanover, Lyme, Campton, Oxford, and Newport.⁴¹

The vitality of the frontier outsurge was felt in Vermont too in the early days of such towns as Norwich, Wethersfield, Norwich, Marlborough, Arlington, Hartford, Pittsfield, Thetford, Timmouthe, Vergennes, Strafford, and Rupert.⁴²

The largest mass migration took place to the lands of the Susquehanna Company in Wyoming Valley beginning in 1762. Many obstacles arose to the plans of the Company in the form of Indian opposition, Pontiac's uprising, and hostile local groups. The Connecticut settlers felt that they were wholly within their rights in settling in the Wyoming Valley because the Charter of 1662 had extended Connecticut westward "to the South Sea" (Pacific Ocean). Unfortunately, however, the royal grant of 1681 to William Penn seriously overlapped with the westward extension of Connecticut; and the Wyoming Valley area, in particular, was located in the disputed sector. The first group of settlers were massacred by Indians early in 1763. The Penns tried vigorously to secure control of the Susquehanna area but failed. By dint of great efforts and even of open border warfare involving "the Yankees" versus the "Pennamites," the New Englanders won out. By 1771 the Connecticut settlers had overcome

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 8.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 9, Morrow, p. 16.

⁴²Rosenberry, p. 11; Morrow, p. 16.

their enemies and established a communal type of settlement at Wyoming Valley. Shares of stock in the Company were distributed free in the next several years where they would do the most good.⁴³ In 1773 Governor Trumbull was granted five hundred acres as a gift, and he accepted. The traditional equalitarian land policy of New England was followed,⁴⁴ and the township system was established. The democratic nature of the land distribution helped create in the Connecticut settlement a loyalty sufficient to defeat the Pennsylvania settlers who suffered from an equal, competitive land system which favored speculators.⁴⁵ After a long campaign the Company succeeded in getting the legislature of Connecticut to pass an act creating the town of Westmoreland in January, 1774.⁴⁶ This precipitated a major political battle. The Susquehanna Company's chief strength lay in eastern Connecticut and it had become involved in the old sectional hostility of eastern and western Connecticut. Moreover, the strong friendship of Trumbull and Dyer made support of the 1774 Westmoreland Act a leading plank in the program of the "eastern" group. The "Old Party" Conservatives, headed by Thomas Fitch, eagerly embraced the issue and fought to reverse the 1774 Act. In fact, it became the chief political

⁴³ Julian P. Boyd, The Susquehanna Company: Connecticut's Experiment in Extension (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, No. 34), passim.

⁴⁴ Special concessions were made, however, in land policies, and gratuities were offered to attract actual settlers as quickly as possible. The normal process of selling lands for profit to shareholders was impossible. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴⁵ Boyd, pp. 27, 32-35. Also, Dutcher, "The Connecticut Background of the Settlement of the Wyoming Valley," in Proceedings of the Wyoming Valley Commemorative Association, v. 157.

⁴⁶ C. R. XIV, 217-220.

issue in Connecticut in 1774. Pitch and supporters drew up opposition tickets, but they scattered their fire so that Trumbull was easily re-elected.⁴⁷ According to the 1774 census, no less than 1922 people lived in Westmoreland—a striking testimony to Connecticut's expansive power. Throughout the Revolution Westmoreland remained completely in possession of Connecticut settlers, and under Connecticut's jurisdiction, despite bitter Pennsylvania attacks.⁴⁸ comparable promotions.⁵¹

The lengthy and bitter dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania was formally adjudicated by a special court set up under Article IX of the Articles of Confederation. This court sat at Trenton in November and December, 1782, heard the counsel for the two states, and awarded the decision to Pennsylvania. Connecticut accepted the decision as final, although considerable private litigation over land titles ensued for a decade or two more.

Other distant Connecticut settlements were made by the Delaware Company on the Delaware River, by the Phineas Lyman Colony near Natches in the lower Mississippi Valley, and by the Midway group in Georgia.⁴⁹

No accurate statistics exist as to the numbers who left Connecticut, but the total must have been large. If we assume that the population increased very nearly at the physiological maximum (doubling every twenty-five years), then in the period 1756-1774 Connecticut showed a fifty-two per cent increase—against a "natural increase" to be expected of seventy-two per cent. Hence, in each decade, the State probably was

⁴⁷ Boyd, pp. 36-38. The safety-valve theory has been at least partially discredited by recent studies. See George H. Florton, "Recent Studies of the Frontier Doctrine," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, *Ibid.*, p. 42 (Mar. 1947), 457. In any case, the loss of these years was a serious blow to Connecticut, whether or not it relieved political and economic tensions.

Rosenberry, pp. 15-17.

losing about ten per cent of its natural increase in the form of emigration.⁵⁰

One can point out several strong reasons for the heavy emigration of the late colonial period: over-population in terms of poor agricultural techniques, cheaper lands elsewhere, economic and political discontent, poor transportation facilities (noticeably heavier migration from such areas), land speculation, and the land companies' promotions.⁵¹

The results of the heavy emigration were important. It took from Connecticut towns and countryside many of the most ambitious, energetic, and progressive young men. The departure of such elements left behind those who tended more to conservatism and uniformity. Connecticut was indeed rapidly becoming known for her "steady habits" and set ways.⁵² This conservative outlook could not help but affect her economic policies during the War.

6. Rank among the Thirteen Colonies

What was Connecticut's relative rank among the thirteen colonies? It is difficult to answer this, as the best-known estimates vary considerably. In 1775 members of Congress estimated a grand total of

⁵⁰ Cf. Percy W. Bidwell, Rural Economy in New England, p. 385 for similar figures.

⁵¹ Morrow, p. 5.

⁵² Ibid., p. 22. The safety-valve theory has been at least partially discredited by recent studies. See George W. Pierson, "Recent Studies of Turner and the Frontier Doctrines," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIV (December, 1947), 457. In any case, the loss of these young men was a serious blow to Connecticut, whether or not it relieved political and economic tensions.

3,018,678 people, divided as follows in rank:⁵³

1	Virginia	640,000	
2	Massachusetts	400,000	
3	Pennsylvania	350,000	(Delaware included)
4	Maryland	320,000	
5	North Carolina	300,000	
6	New York	250,000	
7	South Carolina	225,000	
8	Connecticut	192,000	
9	New Hampshire	150,000	
10	New Jersey	130,000	
11	Rhode Island	59,678	

Delaware and Georgia were known to have fewer people than Rhode Island.⁵⁴

Two other estimates place Connecticut ahead of both New York and South Carolina; one places Connecticut even ahead of Maryland; while in the

Public Papers of Governor Clinton, Connecticut, New York, and North

Carolina are ranked together as 200,000 apiece in fourth place.⁵⁵ The

author's inclination is to rank Connecticut in 1774 tentatively in fifth place, practically tied with North Carolina, ahead of South Carolina, and

New York, and behind Maryland. If one uses the 1774 Tucker computation,

which seems to be more accurate than the Congressional estimate,

Connecticut had slightly under eight per cent of the total population.⁵⁶

There is no reason to believe that this percentage had changed substantially by the end of the Revolution.

⁵³

Greene and Harrington, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁴

Delaware had 40,000 and Georgia 30,000 according to George Tucker in History of the United States, I, 96. Tucker placed Connecticut in sixth place with 200,000 population.

⁵⁵

Greene and Harrington, p. 7.

⁵⁶

7.7 per cent. According to the Clinton estimate the percentage would be 8.3 per cent; to the Congressional estimate, 6.3 per cent.

Continued from 1782-83

COUNTY

7. Population Trends during the War

10111

Between 1774 and 1782 no census appears to have been taken. An act of the general assembly in May, 1776 called for an enumeration being taken.⁵⁷ The Continental Congress had called for this census by an act of December 26, 1775. There is evidence that Mansfield and Penfret selectmen did take the time to make a count, although the totals are not available.⁵⁸ One source gives a population of 5037 for Middletown as of September 1, 1776 (4836 whites and 201 Negroes)—remarkably well in line with the 1774 census figures of 4878.⁵⁹ Various tidbits of information on the local level show a very slow rate of increase during this period. For example, Woodstock's population was reported as 2054 in 1776 and 2032 in 1782. The Trumbull Papers report 2212 for 1779.⁶⁰

The best source of information for the war years is the census of 1782 as found in the Archives.⁶¹ The State called for the census in accord with a Congressional request of December 11, 1781.⁶²

Middletown
Gilliamstown
Woodstock

1774
1776
1778

1780
1782
1784

1786
1788
1790

1792
1794
1796

1798
1800
1802

1804
1806
1808

1810
1812
1814

1816
1818
1820

⁵⁷ C. R. XV, 312-313.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 313, fn.

⁵⁹ Charles C. Adams, Middletown Upper Houses (New York, 1908), p. 57.

⁶⁰ Clarence W. Brown, History of Woodstock, p. 543.

⁶¹ A. R. W., 2d Ser., X, 124-125.

⁶² S. R. IV, 23-24.

1792
1794
1796
1798
1800
1802
1804
1806
1808
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1814
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1818
1820

COUNTY	WHITES	NEGROES AND INDIAN	TOTAL
Hartford	55,647	1320	56,967
New Haven	25,092	885	25,977
New London	30,831	1920	32,751
Fairfield	29,722	1134	30,856
Windham	28,158	485	28,643
Litchfield	33,127	529	33,656
	202,577	6273	208,850

<u>Hartford County</u>	WHITES	NEGROES AND INDIANS	TOTAL
Bolton	1071	10	1081
Chatham	2824	49	2873
Colechester	3169	196	3365
East Haddam	2668	57	2725
East Windsor	3210	27	3237
Enfield	1551	11	1562
Farmington	5453	89	5542
Glastonbury	2250	96	2346
Haddam	1938	12	1950
Hartford	5317	178	5495
Hebron	2135	70	2205
Middletown	4418	194	4612
Somers	1051	7	1058
Southington	1857	29	1886
Stafford	1518	16	1534
Suffield	2248	53	2301
Simsbury	4650	14	4664
Tolland	1330	31	1361
Wethersfield	3597	136	3733
Willington	1053	2	1055
Windsor	2339	43	2382

New Haven County

Branford	2067	100	2167
Cheshire	1974	41	2015
Derby	2039	79	2118
Durham	1040	21	1061
Guilford	2894	53	2947
Milford	2044	151	2195
New Haven	7717	249	7966
Wallingford	3093	175	3268
Waterbury	2224	16	2240

New London County

Groton	3486	337	3823
Lyme	3576	216	3792
Killingsworth	1832	21	1853
New London	5217	471	5688
Norwich	7093	233	7326
Preston	2208	79	2287

COUNTY of New London WHITES NEGROES AND INDIANS TOTAL

New London County (Cont.) as into the present eight townships instead of

Saybrook	2688	50	2738
Stonington	4731	514	5245

<u>Fairfield</u>	In the year 1800 present county of	1800 For. State	
Danbury	2697	50	2747
Fairfield	5003	273	5276
Greenwich	2530	93	2623
New Fairfield	1429	12	1441
Newtown	2354	50	2404
Norwalk	3919	132	4051
Redding	1257	53	1310
Ridgefield	1672	25	1697
Stamford	3756	78	3834
Stratford	5105	368	5473

Windham County of New London as into the present eight townships instead of

Ashford	2251	35	2286
Canterbury	2476	38	2514
Coventry	2006	19	2025
Killingly	3366	12	3378
Lebanon	3857	94	3951
Mansfield	2556	9	2565
Plainfield	1519	54	1573
Pomfret	2489	77	2566
Union	551	1	552
Voluntown	1590	40	1630
Windham	3496	77	3573
Woodstock	2023	29	2052

Litchfield

Barkhamsted	466	37	503
Canaan	1987	74	2061
Colebrook	272	1	273
Cornwall	1144	14	1158
Goshen	1439	11	1450
Hartland	961	—	961
Harwinton	1210	5	1215
Kent	1835	48	1883
Litchfield	3018	59	3077
New Hartford	1274	22	1296
New Milford	2956	59	3015
Norfolk	1243	3	1246
Salisbury	2190	35	2225
Sharon	2184	46	2230
Torrington	1073	4	1077
Washington	1496	6	1503
Watertown	2717	15	2732
Winchester	683	5	688
Woodbury	4980	83	5063
Total	202,577	6,273	208,850

What would the population in 1782 have been by counties if the State then had been divided into the present eight counties instead of the six which it actually had? An estimate is given below.⁶⁴

<u>In the area of the present county of</u>	<u>1782 Population</u>
Hartford	37,500
New London	33,100
Litchfield	31,300
Fairfield	30,900
New Haven	26,300
Windham	19,100
Middlesex	17,800
Tolland	12,900

The density of population in the State was approximately 42 persons per square mile in 1782 as compared with 39.5 in 1774.

The census of 1782 reveals a marked slowing up in the rate of population growth for the period 1774-1782 as compared with 1756-1774. The gain was only 11,267 persons, or 5.69 per cent in eight years. It averaged about .7 per cent yearly as compared with nearly 3 per cent in the 1756-1774 period. In other words, Connecticut grew only one-fourth as fast as in the preceding census period.

Why the marked diminution in growth? Doubtless war operated as it usually has as a check upon population. In addition, the emigration to Vermont, Massachusetts and elsewhere continued. Meanwhile immigration nearly ceased.⁶⁵ More than a few Loyalists departed, mostly near the end

⁶⁴All totals are given to the nearest hundred. Some help was obtained from figures in E. L. Heermance's work. The lack of census figures for any parts of towns in 1782 (or earlier) prevents strict accuracy in many cases. Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven Counties offered special difficulties, while Fairfield County (exact total obtained, 30,856) provided the fewest problems.

⁶⁵Morse explains it as follows: "This comparatively small increase of inhabitants may be satisfactorily accounted for from the destruction of the war, and the numerous emigrations to Vermont, the western parts of New Hampshire, and other states." p. 218.

of the War.⁶⁶ In fact, this Loyalist emigration comprised one of the chief causes of the general slow growth of population for the State as a whole. The most reliable estimates available on this point indicate that about one-half of the Loyalist families left the State, which would mean 1,000 families or about 6,000 persons.⁶⁷

Connecticut was not alone among New England states in this loss. Rhode Island suffered a decline from 59,706 in 1774 to 51,887 in 1783, a loss of 7,819.⁶⁸ In Massachusetts the population climbed slowly from 338,667 in 1776 to 357,511 in 1784—a mere 5.6 per cent increase—almost exactly the same as Connecticut's.⁶⁹

The effects of the war itself are hard to measure. Large numbers of Connecticut's younger men were away for varying periods of time in military service. Some were killed, more died of disease, and others were permanently disabled. Although accurate statistics are lacking, one can perhaps assume a slightly lower birth-rate and a slightly higher death rate. Emigration meanwhile continued at a high rate throughout the war, especially in the period from 1780 on.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ S. C. Johnson, History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1841 (London, 1913) pp. 5-6.

⁶⁷ Oscar Zeichner, "The Rehabilitation of Loyalists in Connecticut," New England Quarterly, XI, 309. Also, W. H. Siebert, "The Refugee Loyalists of Connecticut," Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, V (1916-1917), 92. Comparative census figures for two of the towns with large Tory minorities at the outbreak of the War are of interest as they do reveal a small loss for the war period. Stratford's totals for 1774 and 1782 were 5555 and 5473 respectively; New Haven's, 8095 and 7966.

⁶⁸ Greene and Harrington, pp. 69-70.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 17 and 46.

⁷⁰ Mathews, pp. 129-131. Travels in North America, I, 24, 36, 48.

There is some evidence of a slight movement from British-occupied areas to Connecticut during the War. A number of Long Island patriots, for example, crossed the Sound to live in Milford during the Revolution.⁷¹

Again the growth of population is noticeably uneven. Litchfield County registered by far the largest gain 6311 (23.1 per cent). The others, in order, were: Hartford, 5077 (9.7 per cent); Fairfield, 706 (2.3 per cent); Windham 542 (2 per cent); New London 527 (1.6 per cent) and New Haven -839 (3.1 per cent loss).

One of the puzzling problems of local population study for this period is to determine the number of people who lived in the village community within the township. The census figures tell only the total for the township as a whole—an area usually roughly about six miles square. Obviously, however, the compact village settlement of Farmington, for example, numbered only a small proportion of the total of people residing in the township.

Some evidence is available on this problem. The keen observer, the Marquis de Chastellux, in his travels through the State in 1781, noted the approximate number of houses in several of the villages.⁷²

From this a suggestive table has been worked out.

71

History of Milford, p. 84.

72

Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in North America, I, 28, 38, 43, 455.

	1782 Census Township	Village Proper ⁷³	Per Cent in Village Proper
Farmington	5542	350	6
Lebanon	3931	700	18
Windham	3571	280-350	8-10
Litchfield	3077	350	11
	16,121	1680-1740	10.75 to 11.25

In the eight-year period, 1774-1782, what had happened to the twelve leading towns of Connecticut?

Town	1782 Rank	1782	1774	Per Cent Change in Population	Town List ⁷⁴ of 1782	Town List ⁷⁴ of 1773
New Haven	1	7966	8295	-4	58,481	72,395
Norwich	2	7325	7327	0	59,772	68,649
New London	3	5682	5883	-3	29,052	36,424
Farmington ⁷⁵	4	5542	6069	-9.75	52,894	67,519
Hartford	5	5495	5031	48	42,846	49,036
Stratford	6	5473	5553	-1	43,399	52,000
Fairfield	7	5276	4863	48	41,771	51,000
Stonington	8	5245	5412	-3	32,327	37,839
Woodbury ⁷⁶	9	5063	5313	-5.76	49,652	60,000
Middletown	10	4612	4676	-6	39,897	43,153
Norwalk	11	4051	4388	-8	34,428	44,076
Wallingford ⁷⁷	12	3288	4215	-34.77	28,406	51,051
		64,998	67,934	-4	517,705	633,142

⁷³ A conversion ratio of seven persons per house was employed. Chastellux gave Farmington about 50 houses, Lebanon about 100, Litchfield about 50, and Windham 40 to 50.

⁷⁴ To the nearest per cent or pound.

⁷⁵ Southington was incorporated from Farmington in 1779. With Southington's 1836 persons, Farmington would have 7428, the second highest, and an increase of 22 per cent.

⁷⁶ Woodbury lost a small area to the new town of Washington, created in 1779. Hence the 1774 area of Woodbury probably suffered no loss in population.

⁷⁷ Cheshire was carved out of Wallingford in 1780. The addition of Cheshire's 2015 would give Wallingford 5283, an increase of 7 per cent.

Despite a four per cent decline New Haven retained first place. Hartford, Fairfield, the old Farmington, and the old Woodbury showed population gains, while the other eight towns lost or practically stood still. The ravages of the War, and of British raids, in some cases, reflected themselves in the disappearance of the lusty growth of the 1756-1774 period. Simsbury, not included in the first twelve in 1774, had jumped into tenth place in 1782 with 4664 persons, a gain of 964 over 1774, or 26 per cent. It affords a notable exception to the general picture.

The decline in the towns lists illustrates forcefully the depressing economic effects of the war. The towns hit by British raids—such as New London, New Haven, Fairfield and Merwalk—particularly show this.

8. Negroes and Indians in Connecticut

Distribution of Negroes and Indians in Connecticut
by Counties in 1756, 1774 and 1782.⁷⁸

<u>County</u>	<u>1756 Census</u>		<u>1774 Census</u>		<u>1782 Census</u>
	<u>Negroes</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Negroes</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Negroes and Indians</u>
New London	829	617	1194	842	1920
Hartford	854		1093	122	1320
Fairfield	711		1153	61	1134
New Haven	226		862	61	885
Litchfield	54		331	109	529
Windham	343		476	153	485
	<u>3019</u>	<u>617</u>	<u>5109</u>	<u>1353</u>	<u>6273</u>

The Negro element comprised a very small percentage of the total—about 2.3 per cent in 1756 and 2.6 per cent in 1774. During the Revolution the number probably declined somewhat.⁷⁹ The 1782 census unfortunately

⁷⁸ Based upon C. R. XIV, 483-492 and Morse, p. 218. An excellent study of the Negro in Connecticut is Bernard C. Steiner's History of Slavery in Connecticut, (Baltimore, 1893).

⁷⁹ Ralph F. Weld, Slavery in Connecticut (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission, No. 37), p. 4.

lumps Negroes and Indians together so that the actual decline in negroes cannot be ascertained. It seems probable, though, that these factors operated to produce a slight decrease: British raids in the heaviest slave holding sections, service in the armies, and emigration of Loyalist masters with their slaves.⁸⁰

Among the New England States at the outbreak of the struggle Connecticut ranked second in proportion of slaves to population, and in actual numbers too. This table illustrates the situation.

Year	Colony	Total Population	Whites	Negroes	Per. Cent Negroes
1776	Massachusetts	338,667	333,418	5249	1.6
1774	Connecticut	197,910	191,448	5109	2.6
1774	Rhode Island	59,678	54,435	3761	6.3
1773	New Hampshire	81,050	80,394	656	1.1
1771	Vermont	4,669	4,650	19	.04
1771	New York	168,007	148,124	19883	11.8 ⁸¹

The distribution of negroes in the Colony in 1774 showed a wide variation both in the counties and in the towns. New London County led

⁸⁰ Lorenzo J. Greene, Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776, pp. 89-90.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 74. Corrections have been made because Greene used the total number of Negroes and Indians in calculating the percentage of Negroes; C. R. XIV, 483-491, with slight corrections; Greene and Harrington, pp. 17, 63, 74, 91.

U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Slavery in the Colonies," Massachusetts Historical Society, XII, 421-423.

the procession with 1194 negroes followed by Fairfield with 1153, Hartford with 1093, New Haven with 862, Windham with 476 and Litchfield with 351.⁸² New London county apparently had more negroes than any other county in New England.⁸³

The three leading slave-holding towns were closely bunched: Stratford, with 319; New London, 316; Fairfield, 315. Next in order stood New Haven, 262; Stonington, 243; Middletown, 198; Lyme and Groton, 174 each; Colchester, 173. At the other end of the scale there could be listed Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Hartland and Westmoreland with none, and Stafford, Willington, Union, Somers, and Bolton with from one to four.⁸⁴

It is very difficult to indicate even roughly what proportion of Connecticut's negroes were free in the Revolutionary era. There can be little doubt that the majority were still in servile status before and at the end of the Revolution. It is true that many masters granted freedom to their slaves if they joined the American army. Some took advantage of this,⁸⁵ and a few undoubtedly were manumitted anyway. The clergy campaigned incessantly for abolition, and labor was very scarce. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a bill for gradual emancipation being passed in 1784 which freed all negroes after

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C. R. XIV, 483-491.

83

Suffolk led in Massachusetts with 1049 (in 1776), Greene and Harrington, p. 30; Newport in Rhode Island with 837 (in 1783). Ibid., p. 67.

84

C. R. XIV, 483-491.

85

C. G. S., II, 257-258. Charles M. Andrews "Slavery in Connecticut," Magazine of American History, XII, 422-423.

March 1, 1784 at the age of twenty-five.⁸⁶

Further light upon the location of the negro slaves can be secured from a consideration of the owners of the slaves. Among the largest slave holders of the colonial period were these men:⁸⁷

Indian invasion.

William Headley	-- Branford
H. Buell	-- Coventry 1786 was 617, all
Peter Buell	-- Coventry
(Squire) Bassett	-- Derby. revealed 1387
Agar Tomlinson	-- Derby
Col. Weester	-- Derby 1786 was 617, all
Rev. Joseph Elliot	-- Guilford
Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth	-- Hartford 1786 was 617, all
Rev. Jonathan Edwards	-- Hartford
Edward Hopkins	-- Hartford 1786 was 617, all
John Talcott	-- Hartford
George Wyllys	-- Hartford 1786 was 617, all
Timothy Woodbridge	-- Hartford
Rev. Jared Eliot	-- Killingworth
Col. Benjamin Tallmadge	-- Litchfield
Oliver Wolcott	-- Litchfield 1786 was 617, all
Joseph Stocking	-- Middletown
John Davenport	-- New Haven 1786 was 617, all
Theophilus Eaton	-- New Haven
Jared Ingersoll	-- New Haven 1786 was 617, all
Rev. Ezra Stiles	-- New Haven
James Rogers	-- New London
John Whiting	-- New London
Nathaniel Huntington	-- Norwich
The Lathrops	-- Norwich
Benjamin Isaacs	-- Norwalk
Jacob Griswold	-- Wethersfield
Samuel Wolcott	-- Wethersfield 1786 was 617, all
John Halbone	-- Windham
Samuel Chapman	-- Windsor 1786 was 617, all
Henry Wolcott, Jr.	-- Windsor
Rev. Wm. Worthington	-- Saybrook

The remnant of Indians in Connecticut was inconsequential. The

power of the Indians had been broken beyond repair in the Pequot War

⁸⁶ Acts and Laws of the State of Connecticut (New London, 1784), p. 235.

⁸⁷ Greene, pp. 350ff.

of the late 1630's, though various incidents occurred later in the seventeenth century. After about 1655 the Indians no longer occupied an important place in the life of Connecticut.⁸⁸ The Colony aided her sister colonies in King Philip's War of 1675-76, but did not suffer Indian invasion.

The number of Indians reported in the census of 1756 was 617, all in New London County. The more complete 1774 census revealed 1363 Indians distributed by counties as follows: New London--842, Windham--158, Hartford--122, Litchfield--109, New Haven--71, and Fairfield--61.⁸⁹

The Indians were most numerous in Stonington which had 237. Others standing high included New London, 206; Groton, 186; Lyme, 104; Kent, 62; and Norwich, 61.

The probability is that the number of Indians in Connecticut remained practically constant during the Revolutionary War. The 1782 census failed to differentiate between Indians and Negroes in its total of 6273 for both.

9. Homogeneity

The homogeneity of Connecticut's population was remarkable. Almost all of Connecticut's citizens could look back to an English origin. Connecticut indeed was an integral part of "New" England.

Contemporary evidence of the solidly English nature of the white population is not lacking. Jedidiah Morse, in his able discussion of Connecticut, declared that "the inhabitants are almost entirely of

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C. C. S., I, 243-244.

⁸⁹

C. R. XIV, 483-492.

Some of the Indians who were in Norwich in 1734 (1735-1736), are mentioned in the records of the town of Norwich, 47, 48, 50.

English descent. There are no Dutch, French or Germans, and very few Scotch or Irish people in any part of New England.⁹⁰

There were, however, exceptions to this general statement.

Scattered clusters or individuals of non-English white stock could be found in Connecticut. A few Dutch had strayed across the western border; and some Germans lived here and there. In several towns one or more Huguenot artisan(s) had settled.⁹¹ All of these people together constituted only a tiny and negligible proportion of the total white population.

Although Connecticut residents could travel by traveling abroad, it was not recommended by a commercial traveler for visiting and trade at home. The local roads consisted of a few dirt roads of the time and the period were a primary road.

Since trade routes and the transportation system were available, it is important to consider the transportation system. That is, the fact about the late colonial period is that the transportation system was not as good as it is today. For as a result of the late colonial period, the transportation system was not as good as it is today. The late colonial period was a time of transition in methods of transportation.

Construction and Maintenance of Roads

Responsibility for the construction and maintenance of roads was

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Morse, p. 219.

⁹¹

The Huguenot silversmiths, Rene Grignon who worked in Norwich, (1708-15), and Timothy Bontecou, active in New Haven (1735-1784), are examples. See Curtis, pp. 47, 48, 52.

CHAPTER III

Transportation and Communication

Introduction

The way Connecticut people "got around" over the country was a source of amazement to Americans in colonial times, as at later days. Connecticut travelers, businessmen and emigrants popped up almost everywhere. It reached a point, in fact, where any stranger or new settler promptly was nicknamed a "Connecticut Yankee."¹

Although Connecticut residents showed a zest for traveling abroad, it was not accompanied by a comparable enthusiasm for building good roads at home. The inescapable conclusion is that Connecticut roads of the late colonial period were abominably bad.²

Since trade depends upon the transportation facilities available, it is important to examine Connecticut's transportation system. What is said about the late colonial period may be applied to the revolutionary era as well, for no significant changes were made. As a matter of fact, the entire colonial period was one in which no real improvement was made in methods of transportation.³

Construction and Maintenance of Roads

Responsibility for roads in Connecticut was laid upon the towns by

¹Seymour Dunbar, History of Travel in America (Indianapolis, 1915), I, 41, 42.

²Isabel S. Mitchell, Roads and Road-Making in Colonial Connecticut, (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 14), pp. 31-32.

³Dunbar, I, 2.

a law of 1643.⁴ Hence repair of old roads and construction of new ones was decided upon at town meetings. If the selectmen rejected a petition for a new road, appeal could be made to the county court, and eventually to the general assembly. This process applied only to "public town ways" used for the benefit of the community. Another type, "private town ways" made at the request of individuals for personal use, was handled exclusively by town selectmen with no appeal possible. In time a "private town way" could be made a "public" road.⁵

The layout of the typical Connecticut town, with its green about which clustered the meeting house, tavern(s), and store(s), in itself produced local transport difficulties for the later settlers, whose houses often were located two to eight miles away with no road and a neighbor's property separating them. One had to get to church and to the local store occasionally too, but the town road system rarely had been planned to meet these needs.

The towns were given the job also of building the inter-town roads--the "Country Roads" or "King's Highways." Sturdily independent, the towns largely side-stepped the job, to the detriment of the roads. In 1702 the management was transferred to the county court. Actual laying out of such roads was done by a jury appointed by the sheriff or his deputy while the general assembly possessed a reviewing function. It also appointed a committee to survey roads between towns in different counties.⁶

⁴ C. R. I, 91. This was in Connecticut and not in New Haven Colony.

⁵ Mitchell, p. 8. In 1771 legislation made possible appeal.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

A comprehensive road act of May, 1773, gave to the county courts wide powers in laying out public highways, and in hearing appeals against towns by individuals over public and private highways.⁷

The average road was incredibly crude and rough—usually simply a wide swath hewed out of the woods. No attempt was made to uproot tree stumps or large rocks, or to create a hard smooth surface. The middle often was lower than the sides, so that water streamed down the road. Impassable quagmires developed, especially in late fall, winter, and spring. The one redeeming feature was great width—anywhere from fifty to three hundred feet, but usually about eighty or ninety feet.⁸

In theory, the roads were maintained by the requirement of two days' work from each able-bodied man of sixteen to sixty years. In 1679 the legislature ordered the towns to donate one day's work upon the "King's Highway" within their boundaries. The law became practically a dead letter because most people paid a fine in preference to doing the hard, dirty work on the roads.⁹

Not content with bad roads, people frequently piled logs and firewood on the road, fenced off sections, and even pastured sheep and other animals there.¹⁰ In January, 1774, for example, the legislature took cognizance of the fact that it was customary in some towns "to turn large flocks of sheep on the highways with a keeper, and thereby eat up and destroy the herbage therein, to the great detriment of the poor

⁷ C. R. XIV, 80-82.

⁸ Mitchell, p. 10.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

inhabitants of such towns.¹¹ This practice, therefore, was forbidden under penalty of twenty shillings for every offence.¹¹ A similar act

to prevent obstructions on the highways had been passed in October, in

1713.¹² Resolves all chosen & unfit for use.¹² New and better roads on a more direct route were needed. The general assembly organized a committee

of 1013 R. 1 to Expansion of the Road System back.¹⁶ They recommended

a new route. The opening up of through roads proceeded slowly. By 1700 only one linked up with the intercolonial system, the lower post road, on the Boston-New York route.¹³

The first half of the eighteenth century saw the laying out of a considerable number of roads, mostly east of the Connecticut River, with the special object of providing better communication with the markets at Norwich, Providence, Stonington, and Boston.¹⁴

From 1750 to 1775 the chief new road development occurred in western Connecticut. The rapid settling of the northern part of that area necessitated an expansion of the road system. The first important road through the northwest ran from Hartford through Farmington, Harwinton, Litchfield, Goshen, Cornwall, and Canaan, and on to Albany.¹⁵

¹¹ C. R. XIV, 216-217.

¹² C. R. V, 402.

¹³ Mitchell, pp. 19-20. This had approximately the route of the present New York-Boston "Post Road."

¹⁴ Ibid. See C. R. V, 278, 336 (Glastonbury), 351 (Plainfield, XII, 210, 239 (East Windsor), 375, 397 (Newington), 398 (Glastonbury), 392 (Windham to Norwich).

¹⁵ Mitchell, p. 20.

In 1758 the general assembly was advised that the road "often traveled in from and thro y^e. Towns of Simsbury. New Hartford & Norfolk to and thro y^e Northwestern parts of Canaan toward Albany is in many Respects ill Chosen & unfit for use." New and better roads on a more direct route were needed. The general assembly organized a committee of four men to go over the terrain and report back.¹⁶ They recommended a new route,¹⁷ and the towns involved were empowered to levy a tax. Much more study and agitation ensued before the road, four rods wide, was constructed through Simsbury, New Hartford, and Norfolk. In 1766 the maintenance problem raised its head as no town seemed to be responsible for some sections.¹⁸

Other new roads in the West included one from Litchfield to Canaan,¹⁹ and another from Litchfield, through New Milford into New York. The chief through east-west routes to the Colony of New York numbered four: (1) the northernmost route via Norfolk, already described; (2) one from Hartford through Farmington, Harwinton, Litchfield, and the northern part of New Milford to the Hudson; (3) one from Wallingford via Newtown and Danbury to Fishkill on the Hudson—an important supply route in the Revolution;²⁰ and (4) the Post Road from Boston via New London, New Haven,

¹⁶ Arch., Travel and Highways, II, Dec. 34. This was the so-called "Green Woods" road.

¹⁷ Ibid., Decs. 36, 37.

¹⁸ Ibid., Decs. 38-57.

¹⁹ See Romans' map facing p. 1 for details of this and other routes described. Though this is the best available contemporary map, it is not always strictly accurate on roads, so that it must be used with caution.

²⁰ This route is shown in a map drawn by Claude Joseph Sauthier for Governor Tryon and found in E. B. O'Callaghan, Documentary History of the State of New York (Albany, 1849), I, facing p. 774.

Fairfield, Norwalk, and Greenwich to New York City. The last, incidentally, seems to have been one of the worst in Connecticut.²¹

Trade rather than convenience for travel appears to have been the most important motive for the opening of new highways and repair of old ones.²²

Mileages and Taverns on the Main Roads

Much information about the main post roads can be gleaned from contemporary almanacs. Ames' Almanac for 1774, for example, described the "Upper Post Road" from Boston to Hartford and New Haven with recommended taverns at each point listed first.

Willington, Watertown	9 [miles]	Rice, Ditto	4
Bremer, Waltham	1	Cutler, Western	6
Gleason, Ditto	1	Scott or Graves, Palmer	10
Baldwin, or Smith, Weston	4	Colton, Wilbraham	4
Baker, Sudbury	4	Chapin, Springfield Plains	4
How, Ditto	6	Parsons, Springfield	5
How, Marlboro	2	Colton, Long Meadow	4
Williams, Ditto	4	Kibbe, Enfield	5
Martin, Northboro	5	Elswerth, Windsor	7
Cushing, Shrewsbury	5	Bissell, Ditto	1
Curtis, Worcester	2	Porter, Ditto	3
Woodburn, Brown, Ditto	3	Benjamin, East Hartford	4
Stearns or Jones, Ditto	3	Bull or Butler, Hartford	2
Jones, Ditto	3	Kilburn or Stilman, Wethersfield	3
Serjeant, Leicester	2	Shayler or Fenno, Middletown	11
Capt. Bond, Ditto	1	Camp, Durham	6
Whittemore, Spencer	4	Doolittle or Cook, Wallingford	8
Hunt, Ditto	1	Mansfield, North Haven	5
Wait, Brookfield	4	Killyer Beere, New Haven	8

²¹ Mitchell, p. 24. George M. Duteher, George Washington and Connecticut in War and Peace (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 8), map opp. p. 36.

²² Mitchell, p. 20.

This route gives a mileage of 123 miles from Boston to Hartford and 164 miles from Boston to New Haven. Father Abraham's New England Almanack for 1780 lists more briefly the same route to Hartford, and a mileage of 122.²³ The same almanac presents an alternative Boston-Hartford route via Ames, Medway, Uxbridge, Ashford, Mansfield, Coventry, Bolton, and East Hartford.

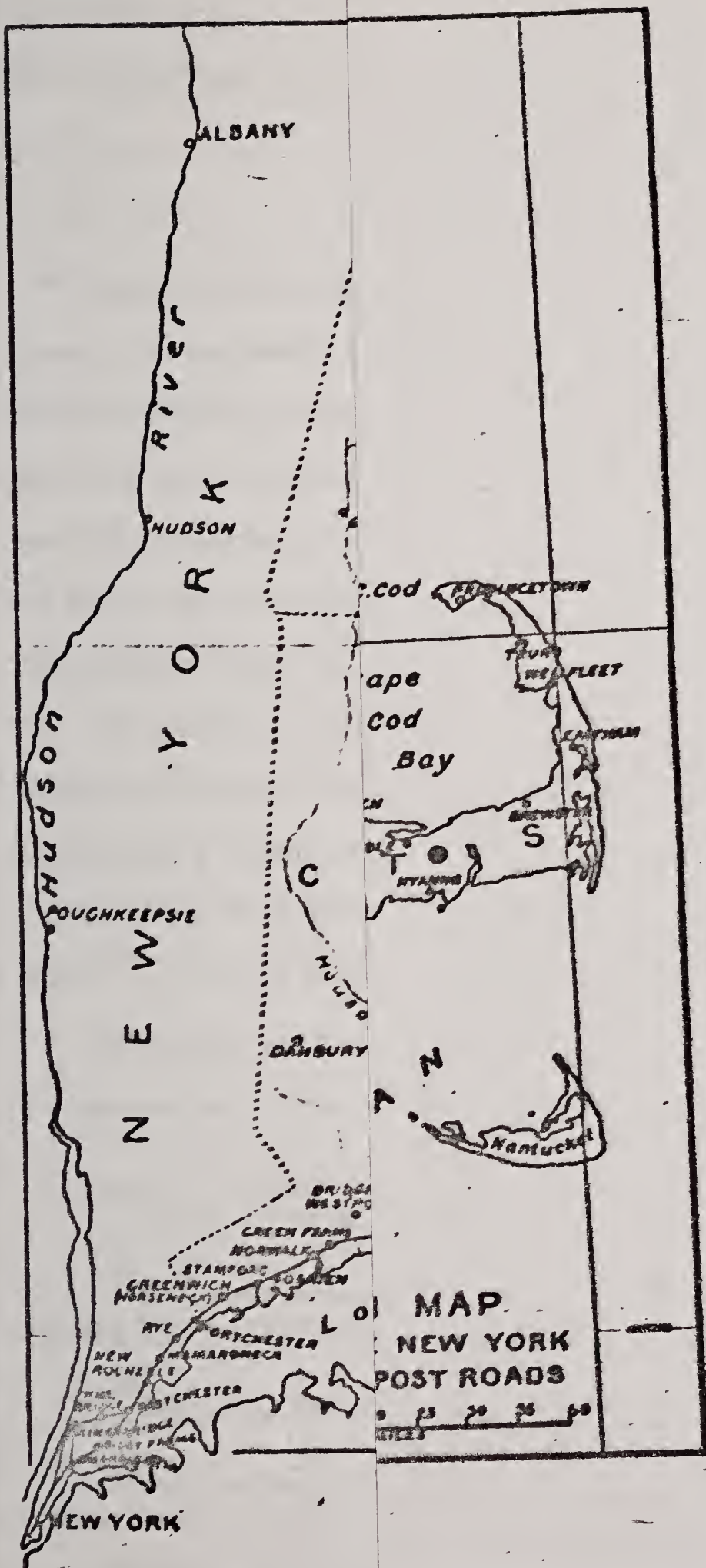
Weatherwise's Almanac for 1782 describes the road from Boston to Providence, Norwich, New London, and New Haven. The Connecticut portion was as follows:

Coventry, Knox	4 [from Tayler's in Soituate]
Volen, Derane	4
Plainfield, Eaton	4
Newent, Burns [ham]	8
Norwich, Lathrop	7
Mohegan, Houghton	7
New London, Douglas	7
Rope Ferry, Durby	6
Lyons, Anderson	6
Ditto, Parsons	3
Saybrook, Saipmar	4
Ditto, Leigh	5
Killingworth, Merrill	5
Guildford, Stone	10
Bradford, Baldwin	11
New Haven, Beers	9

Overall mileage for the trip from Boston to New York by the "Middle Road" to Hartford and New Haven was given as 242. From Boston to Norwich and New London via Worcester and Pomfret totalled 114 miles.

From Hartford to New York the main route was much the same as today, i.e., through Wethersfield (4), Worthington (7), Meriden (9), Wallingford (7), North Haven (5), New Haven (8), Milford (10), Stratford

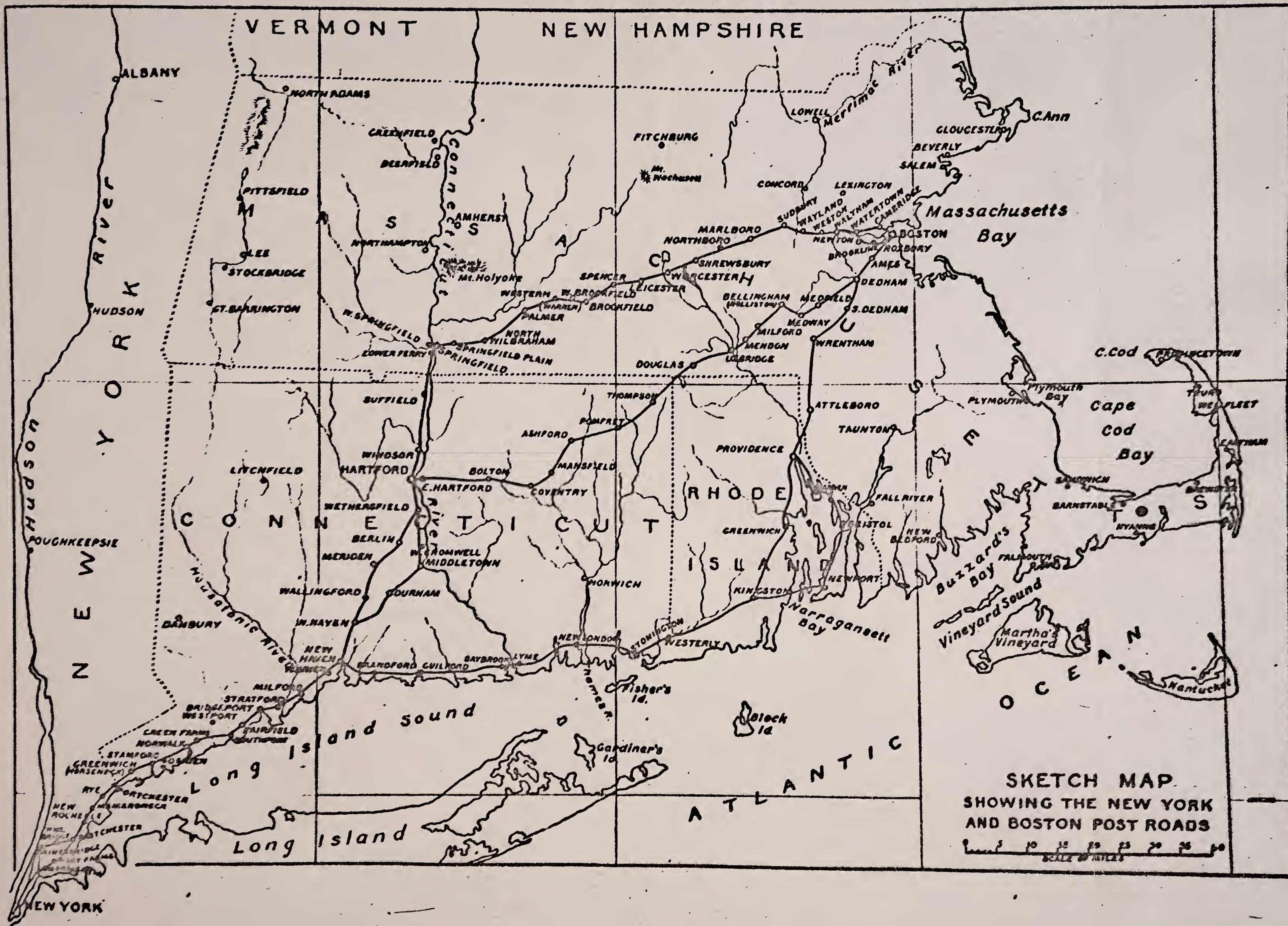
²³ Today's mileage on approximately the same route is 117 miles for Boston to Hartford; 159, to New Haven.



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(4), Fairfield (8), Norwalk (12), Stamford (10), Horse-Neck (7), Rye (6), "New Rochel" (5), East Chester (4), Kingsbridge (6), New York (15),²⁴ for an aggregate of 127 miles.

Although the main roads to and from Hartford were good, the town itself was noted for its wretched thoroughfares. In the 1780's the main street (Queen St.) was considered as the worst road in the

Quality of the Roads

How good were the roads of Connecticut? Very bad, apparently!

Chastellux reported on the eastern approaches very vividly. "From this place [Soituate] to Voluntown the road is execrable; one is perpetually mounting and descending, and always on the most rugged roads."²⁵ "After passing Canterbury, we enter the woods, and a chain of hills, which must be passed by very rugged and difficult roads. Six or seven miles farther, the country begins to open, and we descend agreeably to Windham."²⁶

The best roads of Connecticut were in the vicinity of Hartford. Several travelers verified this situation. De Chosen, one of Rochambeau's aides, declared that on the route from Plainfield to East Hartford the very bad roads further east were replaced by "very good" ones.²⁷ Arriving from the East, Blanchard found the road fine.²⁸

From Hartford the other radiating roads also ranked among the best in Connecticut. From Windsor to Middletown ran the finest road in the

Chastellux, p. 31. De Chosen and Paul F. Caron,

²⁴ Father Abraham's New England Almanac for 1782.

²⁵ Marquis Francois Jean de Chastellux, Travels in North America in the Years 1780-81-82 (New York, 1827), p. 20.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 26, 3-34.

²⁷ Stephen Bonsal, When the French Were Here (Garden City, New York, 1945), p. 91.

²⁸ Blanchard, p. 109.

State.²⁹ The Hartford-Farmington highway also was fairly good according to the report of the state highway engineer, "about two or three feet high" near Canton.³⁰ both to Chastellux and to De Chosen.³⁰

Although the main roads to and from Hartford were good, the town itself was noted for disgraceful thoroughfares. In the 1760's the main street (Queen St.) was described in a petition as the worst road in the colony; and even in the 1780's the streets were still terrible.³¹

In the western part of the State the roads, if anything, surpassed the eastern ones in frightfulness. One looks vainly for a complimentary reference to any one of them. Du Bourg, another French traveler, mentioned the "stoney roads and the endless mountains" of the Waterbury-Southbury area.³² Dr. Samuel Holten in June, 1778 said that the roads from Hartford to Litchfield were "very bad," and from Litchfield to the New York line, the "worst he ever saw."³³ Blanchard noted that "Breakneck" on the road from Waterbury to Southbury was most appropriately named! While at Newtown on a Sunday in June, 1780 he observed that "in the neighborhood of Boston, they come in carriages; but here the country is mountainous and the horse is more suitable."³⁴ Near the Naugatuck

²⁹ Mitchell, p. 1.

³⁰ Chastellux, p. 31. Also, Allan Forbes and Paul F. Cadman, France and New England (Boston, 1925), I, 156.

³¹ Charles W. Burpee, History of Hartford County (Chicago, 1928), I, 220. See also Alexander Johnston, Connecticut (Boston, 1887), pp. 125-126, and Clark, p. 253.

³² Bensal, pp. 93-94.

³³ Mitchell, pp. 26-27.

³⁴ Mitchell, pp. 111-112.

³⁵ Blanchard, pp. 111-112.

River, Chastellux compared the road to stairs. His sledge bogged down in mud, or got stuck on "stones two or three feet high" near Canaan.³⁵

Despite the extreme badness of the roads, it would be unfair to conclude that no efforts were being made to improve them. The Colonial and the State Records of the revolutionary era abound with actions taken to repair roads and lay out new ones. In 1775 alone, Plainfield, Coventry, Sharon, Bolton, Voluntown, Willington, New Haven, and Colchester were among the towns asking and receiving permission to levy taxes for roads.³⁶

Many factors played a hand in causing the poorness of Connecticut roads. Difficulties of terrain and lack of engineering proficiency were involved. Lack of large-scale manufacturing, of comfortable methods of travel,³⁷ and of money and leisure, all contributed to the unhappy result. In the final analysis, the determining factor perhaps was the extreme individualism of the people which manifested itself, especially at the town level, in a lack of cooperation with other towns, and in willful and able evasion of the orders and intentions of the general assembly.³⁸

Despite the darkness of the picture, Connecticut probably had a road system roughly on a par with that of her neighbors and of the more distant colonies.³⁹ Travelers damned the roads of every other colony

³⁵ Chastellux, p. 202.

³⁶ C. R. XV, 76f, 161f, 167, 209f, 211, 212, 216, 219, 275f, 351f, 367, 391f, 394f, 445f.

³⁷ Coaches were virtually unknown in Connecticut until after the Revolution.

³⁸ Mitchell, pp. 31-32.

³⁹ George M. Dutcher, Connecticut's Tercentenary: A Retrospect of Three Centuries of Self-Government and Steady Habits (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 29), p. 15. Europe too at this time had roads which were perhaps no better on the average.

with the same fervency.

A variety of types of larger boats were built and used on the rivers and in the Sound. Water Transportation was as elsewhere in

America: (1) the slow-moving small boats, and (2) the fast-moving boats. Transportation by water then played a much more important role than it does today. The very badness of roads was a standing encouragement to go by water whenever possible. Fortunately Connecticut, as we have seen, had three large river systems plus innumerable smaller streams, navigable and the equivalent of roads, the Berkshire mountains with some towns in the small boats then used.

All types of craft were used on Connecticut waters. One of the most significant was the so-called "Connecticut River flatboat"—a long, shallow, draft freighter, of which there were two types. One was called the pole-boat, usually made of pine planks, twenty to thirty feet long, three to five, wide, and two to three, deep. It was pointed at both ends, and had a flat bottom. It would float loaded in one foot of water. Downstream travel was easy, but four to eight men toiled painfully with long ash or hickory poles to push it upstream. A second type of flatboat was also made, practically the same as the first, but twice as long and wide, and equipped with a mast and sails.⁴⁰ The freight was piled up about the central mast.⁴¹ The flatboat was developed because larger craft were generally too expensive for carrying the low-value merchandise commonly carried, or time was lacking to build the larger craft.⁴² Also, some of the flat boats could go over Enfield Falls on

⁴⁰ Seymour Dunbar, I, 38-40.

⁴¹ Edwin M. Bacon, The Connecticut River (New York, 1906), p. 306.

⁴² Marguerite Allis, The Connecticut River (New York, 1939), p. 33.

the Connecticut.⁴³ As the frequent river floods constantly shifted the

location. A variety of types of larger boats were built and used on the rivers and in the Sound. The main types were much the same as elsewhere in America: (1) the sloop—a small, one-masted vessel; (2) the schooner—a two-masted ship developed first in Massachusetts;⁴⁴ (3) the brig type which included the brigantine, hermaphrodite brig, and the snow, all two-masted ships; (4) the bark (barque), a handsome three-masted ship; and its square-rigged cousin, the barkentine, sometimes with more than three masts.⁴⁵ The larger ships were employed mostly in the Sound, on the lower reaches of the larger rivers, and in foreign trade.

Many navigational problems were encountered on the Connecticut River, and they loomed large due to its economic pre-eminence. Sea-going vessels needed more water. Saybrook Bar was especially dangerous, but other bad sand bars were found, especially at Glastonbury. In 1774 the water on these bars was only five and one-half feet at low tide.⁴⁶ The ship Two Brothers of Rocky Hill on one trip spent several days aground, on Glastonbury bar, and the log commented pointedly, "Damn ye place."⁴⁷

⁴³W. D. Less Love, "Navigation of the Connecticut River," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, XV, 402.

⁴⁴It could have three masts, but this was rare, until long after.

⁴⁵Carl C. Cutler, Important Types of Merchant Sailing Craft, pp. 3-7. There was great variety in nomenclature from town to town, and colony to colony. A two-masted ship called the "ketch," usually square-rigged, but sometimes fore-and-aft rigged on mainsail, was popular in Connecticut.

⁴⁶W. De Less Love, loc. cit., pp. 394-395. The map by Abner Parker of "Saybrook Barr" in C. E. XIII, facing 503, gives eight feet as the minimum depth and three fathoms as maximum. However, this very likely was the figure for high tide.

⁴⁷Roger M. Griswold, "First Sailing Vessels and Merchant Marines on the Connecticut River," Connecticut Magazine, I, 467.

To complicate things, the frequent river floods constantly shifted the location of the bars, the ferry located large in transportation and

There were sporadic attempts to deepen the River's channel. In October, 1764 Joseph Talcott, Samuel Talcott, John Ledyard and William Pitkin, Jr., petitioned the general assembly for permission to collect funds, and impose a toll on ships between Rocky Hill and Hartford to remove the bars enough to create a seven-foot channel in the summer.

The legislature reacted favorably, but there is no indication of any actual dredging being done.⁴⁸ The poor navigation in this area helped retard Hartford's trade and gave Middletown and other lower river towns a definite advantage in foreign trade.⁴⁹

A "Say-Brook Bar Lottery" (resulted from a petition of 1770. The petitioners, Mathew Talcott, George Philips, and others, were authorized to raise a sum of £537 by a lottery for "buoys and water-marks" on the bars and shoals.⁵⁰ The affair dragged on for years. In December, 1776 nothing had yet been done beyond raising part of the money;⁵¹ nor was anything done during the Revolution.⁵²

Ferries and Bridges

In October, 1729 the legislature observed that ferry privileges

No bridge was built across the Connecticut River until long after

⁴⁸ C. R. XII, 318-320.

were exempted from the tolls when riding on public business.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Love, loc. cit., p. 398.

⁵⁰ Based upon David Field, Statistical Account of Middlesex County (1844), C. R. XIV, 96-97; History of Middlesex County (New York, 1884),

p. 10, 11, 71.

⁵¹ C. R. I, 139-140.

C. R. VII, 73-79.

⁵² Love, loc. cit., pp. 395-396.

C. R. VII, 207.

the Revolution; nor were there many other streams bridged except the smaller ones. Hence, the ferry loomed large in transportation and as a communication. ⁵² - Some ferries were still "gauged"

The Connecticut River affords a good case study in the gradual expansion of ferrying facilities. The principal ferry rights granted were as follows: ⁵³

- 1641 - Windsor (Windsor to East Windsor)
- 1662 - Saybrook Ferry (Saybrook to Lyme)
- 1694 - Chapman's Ferry (Haddam to East Haddam)
- 1724 - Brockway's Ferry (Essex to North Lyme)
- 1726 - Middletown (Middletown to present Portland)
- 1735 - Knowles Landing (Soon abandoned)
- 1741 - East Haddam (Haddam to East Haddam; very occasional)
- 1759 - Upper Houses (Present Cromwell to present Portland)
- 1763 - Higganum (Haddam to East Haddam)
- 1769 - Warner's (Chester to Hadlyme)

The general assembly in giving its permission to operate a ferry usually specified the fares to be charged. For example, the fare to be charged at Middletown by Israhiah Wetmore was set at sixpence for a man, horse and lead, and three pence for a single man and horse. ⁵⁴

The ferry privilege generally was granted for a fixed term of years--ten years in the Middletown case.

In October, 1729 the legislature observed that ferry privileges were "a growing and profitable estate" and tax exempt. Therefore, the post riders, the Governor, Assistants and Representatives, and judges were exempted from the tolls when riding on public business. ⁵⁵

⁵⁶Based upon David Field, Statistical Account of Middlesex County (Middletown, 1819), p. 131; History of Middlesex County (New York, 1884), p. 36; C. R. I, 71.

⁵⁴C. R. VII, 78-79.

⁵⁵Chastellux, p. 25.

⁵⁶C. R. LVII, 257.

14. ⁶¹ Regulation of ferries had begun at an early date. Fares were established for the principal ferries by an act of October, 1695, as a result of travelers' complaints. ⁵⁶ Some ferrymen still "gouged" busy passengers, especially at Saybrook, so that an act was passed in May, 1698 imposing a twenty-shilling fine for each offense. ⁵⁷ Other laws and regulations were adopted specifying equipment, size of load and high preference; and the only persons given priority in passage were public officials, physicians and mid-wives. ⁵⁸ Ever another bridge was erected

In 1) The type of boat used in the ferries varied. The canoe, the raft, the chain ferry and the flat boat were employed at different times. ⁵⁹

Chastellux declared about the Hartford ferry: "We pass this ferry, like all the others in America, in a flat boat with ears." ⁶⁰ 120 feet long

and When one recalls that ferries were located upon every important

⁶³ read in Connecticut, their important place in the story of transportation and communication is obvious, of this bridge is well illustrated in the

poet A few bridges spanned some of the rivers. Chastellux spoke of crossing the Housatonic on a wooden bridge, and also, of fording.

Furthermore, "the merchant and trade from the eastern states and the

⁶⁵ eastern C. R. IV, 155-156. to said Norwich landing very considerable

and ⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 248. Hugh Finlay found the Saybrook ferry "well attended" and the boats good when he crossed the River in November, 1773, Finlay, Journal, p. 39.

Since the river was wide, deep, and swift, subject to severe

⁵⁸ Mitchell, pp. 19-20. Employees of the postal service were also exempt from the toll. Finlay noted that the ferrymen "grumbled at being obliged to carry the Post ever when it is dark, or when it rains or blows," but they feared the consequences of not doing so. Finlay, p. 34.

the flood of 1812. See Charles P. Smith, The Housatonic (New York, 1942),

p. 52. ⁵⁹ Bacon, pp. 303-309.

⁶² Bulkin, Norwich, pp. 343-345.

⁶⁰ Chastellux, p. 28.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 347-348.

it.⁶¹ A very good bridge was needed. A lottery to raise £3000 was
 requested. The terrain in the vicinity of Norwich is cut up by streams so that
 the development of bridge facilities there affords a good case study.
 Apparently the first bridge there was built over the Shetucket River
 about 1717. In 1727 a freshet damaged it so badly that the following
 year a new bridge was raised which was 250 feet long and 20 feet high.
 In 1764 a new one was constructed near Captain Lathrop's home.⁶² It took
 over. Near the mouth of the Shetucket River another bridge was erected
 in 1737, but it soon became unsafe. In 1751 a lottery was granted by
 the general assembly; but in 1762, unluckily, the improved bridge was
 swept away. Undaunted, the townspeople completed the so-called

Leffingwell wooden bridge on June 20, 1764, a structure 120 feet long
 and 28 feet above water. Heavy floods in 1777 seriously damaged the
 bridge.⁶³ In 1774 the legislature enacted a law giving allowances

to the town.⁶⁴ By 1780 there had been an intercolonial postal
 The economic importance of this bridge is well illustrated in the
 petition of Norwich and Preston in May, 1778. The bridge over the
 Shetucket River was old and decrepit whereby travel was hindered.
 Furthermore, "the market and trade from the eastern States and the
 eastern parts of this State to said Norwich Landing very considerable
 and has in time past been hampered with a tall bridge of private property
 and now by a dangerous ferry to the great damage of the public...."

Since the river was wide, deep, and rapid in current, subject to severe

⁶¹ Chestellux, p. 39. In 1737 New Milford had erected the first
 bridge across the Housatonic, which served until it was destroyed in
 the flood of 1802. See Chard P. Smith, The Housatonic (New York, 1946),
 p. 92.

⁶² Caultkins, Norwich, pp. 343-345.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 347-348.

floods, a very good bridge was needed. A lottery to raise £5000 was requested to build a "firm and durable cart bridge." The petition was granted.⁶⁴ Various obstacles developed, however, including a disagreement over the location. As a result the bridge was not built until 1784.⁶⁵ On the whole, ferries provided revenue for the towns, but bridges drained it away. While many bridges were originally set up by a small group of men who collected tolls for a few years, the town usually took over control fairly quickly.⁶⁶ Upkeep was expensive, and floods frequently damaged or swept away bridges.⁶⁷ When the drive to unseat Franklin as Deputy Postmaster-General.⁷² Although Franklin had effected great improvements since his appointment An Uncertain Postal System seemed to see only the faults in the postal service.

The beginnings of postal service in Connecticut are obscure. It is known that in 1674 the legislature enacted a law giving allowances to post riders.⁶⁷ By 1702 some kind of regular intercolonial postal service was operating as the Boston News Letter described a fortnightly service from Boston to Saybrook, and a separate route from Boston to Hartford, both of which routes connected with the New York post-rider.⁶⁸

In 1710 Parliament passed the first comprehensive measure covering the British postal system, and it remained the basic law for over a century. A postmaster-general was placed at the head, while deputies

⁶⁴ S. R. II, 49-50.

⁶⁵ The cost for the same distance for a letter of one over was two shillings.

⁶⁶ Mitchell, pp. 14-16.

⁶⁷ See p. 4.

⁶⁸ Franklin was dismissed in January 1774 and Finley C. R. II, 242.

⁶⁹ Finley, p. vii.

were appointed for America and other distant areas.⁶⁹ Rates were established according to weight of the letter and distance carried. For example, a "single" sheet letter under one ounce weight cost nine pence from New York to New London.⁷⁰ The general rate for one hundred miles of land conveyance ranged from six pence to two shillings per letter, according to weight.⁷¹ postal deputy at New Haven, told Finlay that the post. In December, 1772 Hugh Finlay was appointed Surveyor of Post Offices and Post Roads in America. He was sent to America for an inspection tour, and probably, in addition, to open the drive to unseat Franklin as Deputy Postmaster-General.⁷² Although Franklin had effected great improvements since his appointment in 1753, Finlay was disposed to see only the faults in the postal service, including against the various "unofficial" packager place. Finlay's report on postal service along the lower post road was most enlightening. He discovered that Ebenezer Hurd of Stratford had served forty-six years. Although Hurd claimed that he rode only for his bring health's sake, it was common knowledge that he had made a fortune from his riding. He was noted for his willingness to undertake every kind of commission besides his official one, which had a very detrimental effect upon his promptness.⁷³ This way, and provided irregular and slow

⁶⁹ William Smith, History of the Post-Office in British America was (New York, 1920), p. 19.

carried by private arrangement between friends, since this saved postage.

⁷⁰ Finlay, p. xv. The cost for the same distance for a letter of one ounce or over was two shillings.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. xvi.

Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁷² Ibid., p. xxiii. Franklin was dismissed on January 31, 1774 and Finlay succeeded him.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 36, 40-41, 43.

It is not difficult to understand such conduct, however, when one examines the bad conditions and low pay involved in the work. Benjamin Mumford, for example, rode the rough sixty-mile route from Saybrook to Newport which included five ferries and some of the worst road in America; and for this he received only \$55 yearly.⁷⁴

Christopher Kilby, postal deputy at New Haven, told Finlay that the post-riders came into New Haven loaded down with all sorts of boxes, packages, canisters, etc. Sometimes they fastened letters to packages, and then claimed the postage as their own! When Kilby protested, they told him "that the Devil might ride for them if these way letters and packets were to be taken from them."⁷⁵ The official letters often were torn to pieces by rubbing against the various "unofficial" packages placed in the same bag.

While Finlay was near New Haven, he was asked whether he had not "not the Post driving some oxen," since that worthy had agreed to bring some with him! Little wonder that the riders usually were late; or that Finlay exclaimed, "an ass could travel faster!"

Finlay's general conclusion was that the post-riders defrauded the government in every possible way, and provided irregular and slow service.⁷⁶

Throughout the late colonial period a large proportion of mail was carried by private arrangement between friends, since this saved postage. When Franklin was dismissed from his office in 1774, the American people

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⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 40. "Ibid., pp. 34-35, 40-41, 43. Although private coaches and couriers made the trip faster, Justice feels certain that this was not the first public mail service in the country. Ibid., pp. 34-35, 40-41, 43.

⁷⁷

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 35, 40-41, 43.

⁷⁹ N. H. M., 412-413.

almost ceased to use the official postal service and relied upon private means instead.⁷⁷ In June, 1776 was directed to hire a suitable person to ride post. Most people traveled on horseback as there were no carriages in Connecticut until about 1750, and few until after 1783. Governor Trumbull's visit to Norwich during the Revolution in a chaise created a sensation as people flocked to see the vehicle.⁷⁸ In June, 1772 the first stage-coach line was established between Boston and New York by Jonathan and Nicholas Brown and its route included Hartford. It offered fortnightly service at 3d. per mile, but the stage was suspended when war broke out.⁷⁹ In the summer of 1768 a weekly stage-coach began running from Providence to Norwich, which helped business in Plainfield.⁸⁰ As the outbreak of the War the general assembly acted formally to set up an intra-Connecticut mail service. In April, 1775 Thaddeus Burr of Fairfield and Charles Chandler of Needstock were appointed a committee to engage two news-carriers to go over a route from Fairfield to Needstock and back on a schedule which would put the riders in Hartford every Saturday. Also, Garden Saltonstall of New London was to hire two men to carry mail from Needstock to New Haven and vice versa so as to be in New London on Saturdays. The three men mentioned could forward any "extraordinary and important intelligence" at any time at public expense.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Smith, p. 25, Pinlay, p. xviii.

⁷⁸ Dunbar, p. 431.

⁷⁹ Jenkins, pp. 22, 24. Although private coaches and chaises made the trip earlier, Jenkins feels certain that this date marks that of the first public conveyance between the two towns. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23, fn.

⁸⁰ Ellen D. Larned, History of Windham County (Worcester, 1874), II, 76.

⁸¹ C. R. XIV, 416-417.

This arrangement was continued by later sessions of the general assembly.⁸²

The Governor, in June, 1776 was directed to hire a suitable person to ride post to Albany regularly for a year.⁸³

The matter of interstate communication was tackled at the Providence Convention of December, 1776. The general assembly voted to carry out

the recommendations for a weekly service from Lebanon, Connecticut to

Providence.⁸⁴ towns it was customary, just prior to the Revolution, for

most various new postal services operated in different parts of the State

under stimulus of the War. For example, Joseph Rees advertised in the

Courant in June, 1778 that he would ride post for the town of Farmington

via Southington, New Britain, Salmon Brook, Simsbury, and Winchester into

New York State. Those with friends in General Parsons' brigade were

urged to take heed.⁸⁵ ranked first among the colonies, and was grown.

by There were attempts by the Continental Congress to improve the posts,

but with indifferent success. Standards were set up which were rarely

adhered to, and generally the posts were very irregular everywhere. Very

often the Army used its own officers to ride express.⁸⁶ Also, special

couriers were frequently employed both by the State Government and by

the Continental Congress for speedier handling of vital communications.

Wheat was a much less important staple in Connecticut since it was

⁸² C. R. IV, 38-39, 143.

⁸³ C. R. IV, 443.

Barry Caldwell and John I. Falconer, History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1820 (Washington, 1925), pp. 8-31;

⁸⁴ S. R. I, 132, 593. New-England and New-York (New Haven, 1821), I, 106.

⁸⁵ C. C., June 16, 1778.

Caldwell and Falconer, p. 101; Dwight, I, 106.

⁸⁶ Bayles, loc. cit., p. 458.

Caldwell and Falconer, p. 83.

Middlesex County where the principal crop, the "Hessian fly" attacked it in 1777, so that very little was grown after that date.⁴

The Agricultural Basis of Connecticut's Economy

A yield of fifteen bushels per acre was considered average, which was

high. Agriculture formed the backbone of Connecticut's economy throughout

the colonial period. Undoubtedly, well over ninety per cent of the

physically-able male adults engaged in this occupation; in fact, even

in the larger towns it was customary, just prior to the Revolution, for

most men to do at least part-time farming. To an important extent most

of the chief merchants of the Colony "grew their own" for local,

intercolonial, and foreign trade. It is, therefore, useful to examine

briefly some of the chief aspects of Connecticut's agriculture. As Bushels

per Connecticut husbandmen raised a large variety of crops of which

maize, or Indian corn, ranked first among the staples, and was grown

by nearly everybody. Timothy Dwight described no less than ten different

kinds of corn grown in the New England area. Upon fairly good soil,

twenty to twenty-five bushels were obtained, with twice as much the rare

maximum.¹ Among the thirteen colonies, Connecticut's crop ranked above the

average, although it is doubtful that its yield per acre equalled that

of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" farmers.² Dwight, I, 108.

Wheat was a much less important staple in Connecticut since it was plagued by the black stem rust throughout the Colony.³ In (the future)

L. E. Buro, History of Fairfield County (Philadelphia, 1931).

¹Percy Bidwell and John I. Falconer, History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860 (Washington, 1925), pp. 88-91; Timothy Dwight, Travels in New-England and New-York (New Haven, 1821), I, 108.

²American Husbandry, I, p. 53. On the other hand, Morse declares that 20 and barley makes "heavy and good" yield, p. 215. Dwight says that Bidwell and Falconer, p. 101; Dwight, I, 108. northern areas, I, 29.

³

Bidwell and Falconer, p. 93.

¹¹ Middlesex County where wheat was the principal crop, the "Russian fly" ¹² attacked it in 1777, so that very little was grown after that date.⁴

A yield of fifteen bushels per acre was considered average, which was ¹³ higher than in New York and the Middle Colonies.⁵ Morse claimed that the best wheat lands in Connecticut produced twice as great a yield as the ¹⁴ best in New York.⁶ If true, this condition probably was ¹⁵ due to better methods rather than to superior soil. The chief wheat-growing section was Fairfield County in which the towns of Fairfield, Redding, Norwalk, Wilton, and Weston held a predominant position.⁷ ¹⁶ Lack of entomology.

Among other grains cultivated were rye, barley and oats. Nearly ¹⁷ every farmer grew rye which usually averaged about ten to fifteen bushels per acre.⁸ Barley and oats generally yielded very poorly.⁹ ¹⁸ Nature of

Of growing importance in the eighteenth century was the cultivation of flax.¹⁰ It was raised both for the fiber and for seed, part of the seed being exported to Europe.¹¹ Fairfield County was noted for flax ¹² whortleberries, raspberries, and strawberries, and cranberries.

¹³ David D. Field, Statistical Account of the County of Middlesex, (Middletown, 1819), p. 14; Dwight, p. 40.

¹⁴ Bidwell and Falconer, p. 101; Dwight, I, 100.

¹⁵ Thomas W. Frothingham, History of the Ancient Maritime Interests of New Haven, p. 215. Haven Historical Society Papers, I, 113.

¹⁶ D. H. Hurd, History of Fairfield County (Philadelphia, 1881), p. 818.

¹⁷ Bidwell and Falconer, pp. 93-95.

¹⁸ Bidwell and Falconer, p. 101.

¹⁹ American Husbandry, I, p. 53. On the other hand, Morse declares that oats and barley showed "heavy and good" yield, p. 215. Dwight says that they had less weight and value than in more northern areas, I, 40.

²⁰ Bidwell and Falconer, p. 90.

²¹ Trumbull, pp. 19-20.

production,¹¹ although around New Haven, also, it was raised in large quantities.¹²

to export to England, he tried to interest the farmers in

Various vegetables were grown in Connecticut. Beans seem to have been among the most important as they are mentioned in the 1774 reply to the Board of Trade;¹³ but peas were declining due to insect enemies.¹⁴

Potatoes, turnips, and pumpkins were important also.¹⁵ Wethersfield, being specialized in onion production which proved very profitable. It was considered important enough by the general assembly to result in a bill in May, 1773 setting the minimum weight for a bunch of onions.¹⁶

Many kinds of fruit were grown in Connecticut throughout the colonial era, but only apples were much appreciated. The popularity of brandy and cider explained the latter! During the Revolution the manufacture of brandy increased rapidly, especially in Hartford County.¹⁷ An amazing variety of wild fruit could be found in the Colony from its earliest days. Wild cherries, plums, currants, grapes, strawberries, dewberries, whortleberries, raspberries, mulberries, blueberries, and cranberries

abounded.¹⁸ Elliot, *Essays on the Field Husbandry in New England* (New York, 1854 ed.), pp. 15-17, 28-29, 188-189. Elliot gives a very thoughtful discussion of the various kinds of the fine possibilities for crop.

¹¹ Dwight, III, 519.

¹² Thomas R. Trowbridge, History of the Ancient Maritime Interests of New Haven, in New Haven Historical Society Papers, III, 113.

C. R. VII, 494-495.

¹³ C. R. XIV, 499.

J. L. Bishop, History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860

(Part 1)¹⁴ Bidwell and Falconer, pp. 98-99.

¹⁵ Merce, p. 215. Jeff, Silk Manufacture in the United States (New York, 1844), p. 32.

¹⁶ C. R. XII, 82.

Bishop, p. 101.

¹⁷ Olson, p. 2.

¹⁸ W. P. McDowell, History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut (Publications of the Centenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 50), p. 2. Trumbull, pp. 19-20.

tobacco. As a part of Jared Eliot's campaign to find a staple crop for

Connecticut to export to England, he tried to interest the farmers in

hemp-growing.¹⁹ Although hemp never became a staple, Eliot's efforts

did result in a gradual increase.²⁰ largest growers and traders in tobacco

in silk-culture also was attempted—with indifferent success. Official

encouragement was given by a law of 1734 which offered bounties on sewing

silk, silk stockings, and silk stuffs.²¹ Two men deserve chief credit

for establishing silk-culture in Connecticut—Dr. Ezra Stiles of New

Haven, and Dr. Nathaniel Aspinwall of Mansfield who launched experiments

in 1758 and 1760 respectively.²² The latter's experiments caused

Mansfield to take the lead. Silk-raising and manufacturing were checked

by the Revolution.²³ In any case, the high price of labor stood as a

decisive obstacle to large-scale development.²⁴ (1771), however, tobacco

Tobacco ranks as one of Connecticut's oldest crops, for there is

evidence that it was raised at Windsor as early as 1640.²⁵ By 1700

¹⁹ Jared Eliot, Essays Upon Field Husbandry in New England (New York, 1834 ed.), pp. 15-17, 38-39, 168-189. Eliot gives a very thoughtful discussion of the need for a staple, of the fine possibilities for hemp, and of his own success in growing it.

²⁰ Olsen, pp. 15-16.

²¹ C. R. VII, 494-495.

²² J. L. Bishop, History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860 (Philadelphia, 1864), I, 361.

²³ William C. Nyckoff, Silk Manufacture in the United States (New York, 1883), p. 32.

²⁴ Bishop, p. 101.

²⁵ Adrian F. McDonald, History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 52), p. 2.

tobacco leaf was being raised for export, mostly from the Windsor area. Already farmers had discovered that the Connecticut River Valley was peculiarly well suited to the cultivation of tobacco.²⁶ Captain Ebenezer Grant of Windsor became one of the largest growers and traders in tobacco in the 1744-1767 period.²⁷ For example, Captain John Ellsworth of Windsor sold Captain Grant 28,110 pounds in the period of November 15-24, 1752.^{28, 32}

The production of tobacco had attained enough importance by 1753 to cause the general assembly to enact a law to regulate curing and packing of tobacco. In each tobacco town two surveyors and packers of tobacco were to be chosen. Rigorous standards were to be upheld under severe penalties and the owners were to shoulder the cost of packing and branding the casks.²⁹ Just prior to the Revolution (1750-1775), however, tobacco production declined due to the French and Indian War and competition from Virginia.³⁰ It, and yield a handsome profit. The beef, pork, butter

and cheese of Connecticut were around 1760 a trend of great significance in Connecticut's agricultural history developed. This trend consisted of a marked increase in grazing and a decrease in tillage of the soil.³¹ Large amounts of butter and cheese were exported from Windsor and Litchfield Counties to the southern states and the West

²⁶ McDonald, pp. 4-5. Windsor and Litchfield Counties, plus Stonington

in ²⁷ London County. ³⁴ Large amounts of butter and cheese were exported
²⁸ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

from Windsor and Litchfield Counties to the southern states and the West
²⁹ John A. Stoughton, A Corner Stone of Colonial Commerce (Boston, 1911), p. 31.

³⁰ C. R. X, 202-203.

³⁰ McDonald, pp. 5-6.

³¹ Olson, pp. 4-5.

³² Bissell and Saloner, p. 108.

Raising of livestock more and more occupied the time of Connecticut husbandmen, with cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs being raised in large numbers. "Connecticut pork" comprised meat of that produced in New England, and it was noted for high quality. Plentiful supplies of corn and nuts (oak and beech) helped fatten the pigs. The increasing market for wool stimulated sheep-raising in the latter half of the eighteenth century.³² From 50 to 300 acres apiece, held in fee simple.³⁷ Perhaps

100 Encouraged by growing markets in other mainland colonies and abroad, Connecticut farmers concentrated more and more upon beef cattle, horses, and mules. As Jedidiah Morse described it: "The soil is very well calculated for pasture and mowing, which enables the farmers to feed large numbers of neat cattle and horses.... Many farmers, in the eastern part of the state, have lately found their advantage in raising mules, which are carried from the ports of Norwich and New London, to the West, India Islands, and yield a handsome profit. The beef, pork, butter, and cheese of Connecticut, are equal to any in the world."³³ If any, were

Two-year old animals were driven from New York and Vermont to Litchfield County and elsewhere to be fattened up through a winter, spring, and summer for sale in the fall. The chief grazing towns lay in the hilly regions of Windham and Litchfield Counties, plus Stonington and in New London County.³⁴ Large amounts of butter and cheese were exported

from Windham and Litchfield Counties to the southern states and the West Indies.³⁵

Bidwell and Falcener, pp. 115-116.

³² Ibid., p. 3. Morse implies careless treatment of the land, and quick death of its fertility. Connecticut farming was actually much more intensive than that of the upper south, but it definitely was extensive as compared with contemporary European methods. Thomas J. Worthen, *The First Americans* (New York, 1927), p. 59.

³³ Morse, p. 215.

³⁴ Olson, pp. 4-5.

³⁵ Bidwell and Falcener, pp. 79-80.

Bidwell and Falcener, p. 109.

also. The increase in grazing was aided by a larger use of artificial grasses during the gaps between grain crops. The old natural pasturage in meadows and woods was becoming exhausted so that new source of feed for livestock was valuable. The use of timothy, red clover and other English grasses was noteworthy.³⁶ Millage, 21.4 per cent in 1840. How large was the average Connecticut farm? According to Morse, they ran from 50 to 300 acres apiece, held in fee simple.³⁷ Perhaps 100 to 200 acres could be taken as a rough average. Actually, the acreage under cultivation was too large in terms of equipment and labor available.³⁸ unimproved.⁴²

The methods employed by Connecticut farmers deserve attention. Generally, they could be classified as primitive, wasteful, and unprofitable. This was a society in which extensive farming, or the application of relatively small amounts of labor to large areas of land, was the rule,³⁹ and in which there was often little effort to produce a large surplus because for most of the farmers the markets, if any, were very difficult to reach. The farmers hauled their surplus produce to market in little two-wheeled carts, or in sleds during the winter sleighing season.⁴⁰ Most of the more enterprising farmers were

concentrated in river or coastal towns--the only places where cheap and

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 102, 104.

³⁷ Morse, p. 218.

³⁸ Bidwell and Falconer, pp. 115-116.

³⁹ Extensive farming implies careless treatment of the land, and quick destruction of its fertility. Connecticut farming was actually much more intensive and careful than that of the upper South, but it definitely was extensive as compared with contemporary European methods. Thomas J. Wertenbaker, The First Americans (New York, 1927), p. 59.

⁴⁰ Bidwell and Falconer, pp. 79-80.

adequate transportation facilities were available.⁴¹ Animal in New England,

but Only a small proportion of each farm was actually cultivated. A table of land utilization for 1796 indicated a situation undoubtedly very similar in the 1770's. Out of the total of taxable land in Connecticut, only 12.8 per cent was in active tillage, 21.4 per cent in "upland mowing and clear pasture," 6.2 per cent in pasture, 29.1 per cent in brush land, pasture, and 30.5 per cent in unenclosed lands. Hartford and Fairfield Counties had larger proportions of cultivated lands due to accessible markets and better soil. For the state as a whole, about two-thirds of the land was unimproved.⁴²

Lack of good implements greatly hampered the farmer. In 1770 he mostly used the same crude tools of the pioneer settlers of a century and a half earlier. Wheat and other grains were commonly reaped with a sickle, while grass was cut with a scythe. One-half to three-quarters

acre per day was the normal stint of a busy reaper or mower. The grain usually was threshed with a flail and winnowed by throwing it against the wind and running it through with sieves.⁴³

The tools generally were heavy and clumsy. Most of the woodwork was made at home, and the iron parts were fashioned by the village blacksmith. The plows, wooden with poor iron plating, were badly

designed and inefficient so that they merely scratched the surface, and it took two men a day to do one to two acres. The harrow also was pulled by animal power, and used heavily for preparing the soil, covering seeds,

⁴¹ Charles M. Andrews, Connecticut's Place in Colonial History (New Haven, 1924), pp. 20-21.

⁴² *Wartons*, pp. 57-58.

⁴³ Bidwell and Falcner, pp. 119-120.

⁴⁴ Bidwell and Falcner, pp. 125-126.

and weeding corn.⁴⁴ The ox was the chief working animal in New England,¹ but use of horses was on the increase.⁴⁵ was Jared Elliot, the clergyman. He From start to finish the routine made for meager crops.⁴⁶ The seed used was generally very poor, and no selective process for improvement was used.⁴⁶ Often the planting was done by hoe without any plowing at all. Seeds of rye, wheat, and other grains often were raked in by hand, or scratched in by harrow.⁴⁷ More often than not, no manure was used in preparing the soil. Fields often were allowed to lie fallow every third year, but this was a poor answer to the soil exhaustion problem. In animal husbandry, likewise, careless methods, including common ranges, ensured poor skinny stock.⁴⁸ fertilizer.⁴⁹ In fact, there hardly was a Even some contemporaries clearly realized the backwardness of farming methods. The shortcomings of Connecticut agriculture were well summed up by Dwight.

Another factor which contributed to poor farming was the necessity The husbandry of New England is far inferior to that of Great Britain.... The principal defects in our husbandry, so far as I am able to judge, are a deficiency in the quantity of labour, necessary to prepare the ground for seed; insufficient manuring; the want of a good rotation of crops; and slovenliness in cleaning the ground. The soil is not sufficiently pulverized; nor sufficiently manured. We are generally ignorant of what will best succeed each other; and our fields are covered with a rank growth of weeds.⁴⁹ aid to better agriculture.

⁴⁴Bidwell and Falcener, pp. 123-124.

proper use of domestic animals were farmers or members of a farm

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁶Olson, p. 8.

⁴⁷Bidwell and Falcener, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁸Wertenbaker, pp. 57-58.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 17-18, 22.

⁴⁰Dwight, I, 108-109. Dwight's description applied to methods of the first decade or two of the nineteenth century. The methods of the eighteenth century probably were somewhat worse.

The most energetic and influential, eighteenth-century, agricultural reformer in Connecticut (and New England) was Jared Eliot, the clergyman. He believed and wrote that the cultivation of the earth was the most glorious occupation possible for mankind.⁵⁰ Eliot studied thoroughly agricultural practices in Connecticut, and he took special interest in all experiments of which he heard. Although limited in time by his clerical duties, he undertook some experiments himself. He advocated the draining of bogs which would make available much rich but idle land.⁵¹ He outlined a process for dealing with worn-out land, already a problem in some localities; and he ascribed the decline in wheat to failure to restore lands with fertiliser.⁵² In fact, there hardly was a phase of agriculture in which he failed to exhibit interest and to seek improvements. His immediate influence, however, was probably quite small.

Another factor which contributed to poor farming was the necessity of being a jack-of-all-trades. Fishing, hunting, maple sugaring, distilling, and potash-making all added to the farmer's income, but interfered with improvement of methods of husbandry.⁵³ Self-sufficiency was a major characteristic of the colonial Connecticut farm, but not an aid to better agriculture.

One must constantly keep in mind the fact that the overwhelming proportion of Connecticut citizens were farmers or members of a farm

⁵⁰ Eliot, p. 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19, 29.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

family. Even in the river and coastal towns where commerce was important, nearly all the inhabitants, also, in part, depended upon farming.⁵⁴

Manufacturing, Commerce, and Education

There were good reasons for the general prevailing backwardness.

The incentive to improve methods was absent because of (1) no serious competition from outside and (2) not enough population pressure from within. Bad as farming methods were in Connecticut and meager as the returns, by present-day standards, there is no evidence that Connecticut ranked below average for the times. In fact, during the Revolutionary War it was to become noted as the "Provision State," for reasons to be discussed at a later point.⁵⁵

Brief, unenlightening, and inaccurate to boot, that was the report! It is easier to understand, though, when one remembers that deliberate understatement was the policy in Connecticut's reports to London.

Actually, the report is suggestive rather than conclusive. Under the self-sufficient type of agricultural economy which prevailed the average family did make much of its own clothing, household and farming utensils, and tools. Yet a considerable amount of manufacturing occurred for nearby markets. While manufacturing was far overshadowed by farming, it did possess a real importance in the late colonial and revolutionary periods.

As early as February, 1740 (41) the legislature passed an act to encourage the setting up of cotton manufacturing by having the Governor send forth a ship to obtain the raw material. At the same time, hemp and flax were ordered grown by each family. At least "half a pound of hemp or flax" was the quota per family for the year.⁷ It is difficult

⁵⁴ Bidwell and Folsom, p. 123.

⁵⁵ R. H. IV, 492.

⁷ See Chapter XVII.

Q. R. I, 59-61.

to imagine large-scale manufacturing with these orders, but the concern with the problem is significant.

Manufacturing, Mining, and Fishing

Although the great part of cloth and clothing was made by each family, if one accepted at face value the 1774 report of the Governor and Company of Connecticut to the Board of Trade on the subject of manufactures, he would conclude that Connecticut's manufactures were relatively worthless. "In cloth working" and had spent "considerable to fit himself to promote the trade of making cloth and serge." He said the manufactures are coarse Linens and Woolens, done in the Family-way for the Use of the poorer Sort, Labourers, and Servants; also Iron-mongery, but export none.¹

Brief, unenlightening, and inaccurate to boot, that was the report! It is easier to understand, though, when one remembers that deliberate understatement was the policy in Connecticut's reports to London. In fact, actually, the report is suggestive rather than conclusive. Under the self-sufficient type of agricultural economy which prevailed, the average family did make much of its own clothing, household and farming utensils, and tools. Yet a considerable amount of manufacturing occurred for nearby markets. While manufacturing was far overshadowed by farming, it did possess a real importance in the late colonial and revolutionary periods. Milling per year for wool cloth.²

As early as February, 1640 (61) the legislature passed an act to encourage the setting up of cotton manufacturing by having the Governor send forth a ship to obtain the raw material. At the same time, hemp and flax were ordered grown by each family. At least "halfe a pound of hemp or flaxe" was the quota per family for the year.² It is difficult

¹10-11: C. R. XIV, 400.

²C. R. I, 50-51.

to imagine large-scale compliance with these orders, but the concerns.⁶ with the problem is significant: eight looms in operation weaving duck. Although the great part of cloth and clothing was made by each family for its own use, the manufacture of woollen cloth for commercial purposes had started in Connecticut at an early date on a small scale. In May of 1686, the legislature noted that "Mr. Francis Thrasher [was] improving himself in cloth working" and had spent "considerable to fit himself to promote the trade of making cloth and serge." He was granted, therefore, with his servant, exemption from militia training and highway work.³ It seems to have been an early center for cloth and clothing work. Massachusetts took the lead in establishment of fulling mills, beginning in 1643, but Connecticut followed suit fairly quickly. In 1686 one was set up at East Hartford. Others were launched as follows: in 1693 at New London, in 1700 at Stamford, in 1703 at Colechester, and in 1707 at Guilford.⁴ Limited in late colonial times to lead to more than a mill. In May, 1734 an act was passed for "the Encouragement of raising Hemp, making Canvas or Duck, and also for making Fine Linen." It offered a bounty of four pence for every pound of hemp, of twenty shillings for every belt of canvas or duck of specified dimensions, and of two shillings per yard for good silk.⁵

Several instances occurred of individuals asking for special encouragement to manufacture scarce articles. Richard Rogers of New London, for example, petitioned for sole liberty to make duck and in

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1734-1735, 1736-1737

³ C. R. III, 196.

⁴ C. R. IV, 231. The legislature of Connecticut seems to have exercised

⁵ Arthur H. Cole, The American Wool Manufacture (Cambridge, 1928), I, 10-11. See also History of the Wool Industry in the United States (Washington, 1916), I, 47.

⁶ C. R. VII, 512-513.

⁷ Francis H. Carrington, History of Norwich (New London, 1866) pp. 607-608.

October, 1725 he was given the exclusive right to do so for seven years.⁶ The previous year he already had eight looms in operation weaving duck. Results apparently were poor, perhaps partly due to high costs of production from prices inflated by paper currency.⁷ The first mine was opened. The petition of John Bulkeley of Colchester in May, 1753 for a twenty-one year monopoly on machines for dressing and cleaning flax was rejected by the general assembly.⁸ In the same year, however, a fifteen-year sole right for dressing flax was granted to Jabez Hamlin of Middletown and Elisha Chauncy of Durham upon prescribed conditions,⁹ and Norwich appears to have been an early center for cloth and clothing manufacture. In 1768 Christopher Leffingwell began the weaving of stockings there and in the period from 1773 to 1780 four fulling mills with clothiers' shops and dyehouses were put into operation.¹⁰ By and large, the domestic market for cotton, woollen, and linen cloth and clothing was too limited in late colonial times to lead to more than a minor development of their manufacture.¹¹

The manufacture of iron assumed an important place in Connecticut prior to the Revolution. The first iron furnaces apparently were opened at East Haven in 1658 and at New London at about the same time. In 1761

⁶C. R. VI, 572. See also Charles A. Lumsden, *The Early Iron Industry of Connecticut*, pp. 52. Harry Carman, *Social and Economic History of the United States* (Boston, 1930), p. 147.

⁷William B. Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England* (Boston, 1894), II, 498.

⁸Hishop, p. 511.

⁹Arch., *Industry, 1708-1789*, I, Dec. 171.

¹⁰C. R. X, 231. The legislators of Connecticut seem to have exercised a discriminating attitude toward granting monopolies as they recalled the great abuse of them in England. Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (Washington, 1916), I, 47.

¹¹Frances M. Caulkins, *History of Norwich* (New London, 1886) pp. 607-608.

a furnace began operation at Killingworth (Clinton).¹¹ In the 1760's, but the major development, however, came in northwestern Connecticut. The best iron deposits in the Colony were those of hematite located in the towns of Salisbury, Sharon and Kent.¹² About 1732 the first mine was opened at Ore Hill in Salisbury. Two years later, Thomas Lamb obtained rights to fifty acres at Line Rock and set up the first forge there.¹³ Production continued at the mine and forge well into the nineteenth century. In 1762 a Mr. Hasleton and others erected a blast furnace at the outlet of Wanaquois Lake.¹⁴ The richness of the Salisbury ore, and its toughness, soon won it a reputation as the best in the country.¹⁵ Before the Revolution iron furnaces were set up at other places such as Lakeville, Kent, Canaan, and Roxbury.¹⁶ Not all of this expansion was achieved without aid from the Colony. In 1767, for example, Charles Caldwell of Hartford and George Caldwell of Salisbury requested a loan of £1200 to complete their iron development at Salisbury. The petition received assent from the general assembly.¹⁷ While cutting iron from nails Among the famous figures who invested in the iron industry was Jared Eliot who won a medal from the Society of Arts in England for producing iron from magnetite in Killingworth.¹⁸ William Samuel Johnson

¹¹ Herbert C. Keith and Charles R. Harte, The Early Iron Industry of Connecticut, p. 69. Harry Carman, Social and Economic History of the United States (Boston, 1930), p. 147.

¹² Keith and Harte, p. 11.

¹³ Bishop, p. 511.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 147. See also Edward F. Murphy, Economic History of the United States (New York, 1931), p. 79.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 513. Keith and Harte, p. 69.

¹⁶ Arch., Industry, II, Docs. 131-132. The date in his Social and Economic History of the United States, p. 147.

¹⁷ Bishop, p. 515.

became involved in ironworks at Bull's Falls in Kent in the 1760's,¹⁸ but the profits were disappointing. The British

iron manufacturers sought special monopolistic privileges for slitting mills to Ebenezer Fitch in 1722¹⁹ and to Colonel Joseph Pitkin of Hartford in 1747.²⁰

By the mid-eighteenth century Connecticut was one of the leading mainland English colonies in the number of iron works with eight, while Massachusetts had only four, and most of the other colonies, fewer still.²¹ By the end of the colonial period Pennsylvania contained the

largest number. It is probable that the first steel in America was produced in Connecticut in the 1720's.²² By 1750 a survey of steel

mills showed that Connecticut had one, Massachusetts and New Jersey one each, and Pennsylvania, two.²³

In addition to the many handicaps hampering expansion of iron and steel production already, Parliament in 1750 passed the Iron Act. Three types of ironworks were forbidden: slitting mills cutting iron from nails, plating forges making sheet iron, and steel furnaces turning out blister steel for tools. These restrictions applied only to new works, some of the leading silversmiths also made clocks.²⁴

¹⁸ George C. Groce, William Samuel Johnson (New York, 1937), pp. 42-43. ¹⁹ Arthur C. Young, History and Development of the Colonial Iron Industry (Philadelphia, 1913), pp. 65-72.

¹⁹ C. R. VI, 312-313.
²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91; *ibid.*, I, p. 491.

²⁰ C. R. IX, 320.
²¹ C. R. XIII, 617.

²¹ *Carmen*, p. 147. See also Edward P. Humphrey, Economic History of the United States (New York, 1931), p. 179.
²² *Transactions of the Connecticut Historical Society*, No. 27, p. 1.

²² In 1727 according to Fred Shannon in Economic History of the United States, p. 113, *Carmen* gives 1722 as the date in his Social and Economic History of the United States, p. 147.
²³ *Early History of Connecticut*, p. 79.
²⁴ *Humphrey*, p. 79. (Meriden, 1913), pp. 64-110, *passim*.

but old ones could continue. On the other hand, duties were removed upon colonial pig iron, and iron-bars (shipped to London). The British iron manufacturers wanted cheap raw materials, but objected to competition from colonial finished iron (and steel) products.²⁴ This law suffered the same fate as that of most unpopular British acts—

widespread disobedience. For example, a slitting mill was established at Enfield in 1773.²⁵

John Brown, while living at Windsor from 1742 to 1760, made clocks

Aaron Elliot of Killingworth was making steel in 1772 when he

petitioned the general assembly for a loan of £500 to improve his

business. He particularly wanted to get his iron from Connecticut ores rather than from New York.²⁶

employed men on the iron works and made about two hundred watches yearly.³²

The clock industry of Connecticut was small but distinguished in

the colonial period. Thomas Nash, an original settler of New Haven in 1633, apparently made the first clock on the American continent.²⁷

Little more was heard of clockmaking until the 1720's. In 1726 Ebenezer

Parnole put a tower clock up in the Guilford meetinghouse. From about

that time onward small clockmakers flourished in many towns in Connecticut.

Several score clockmakers in all were active in the 1725-1783 period.

Some of the leading silversmiths also made clocks.²⁸

²⁴ Arthur C. Bining, British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry, (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 65-72.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 91; Bishop, I, p. 491.

²⁶ Benjamin T. Marshall, Modern History of New London County, p. 167, C. R. XIII, 617. was attained after the Revolution.

²⁷ Penrose R. Hoopes, Early Clockmaking in Connecticut (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 23), p. 1.

²⁸ Those active both in clockmaking and silvermaking included John Avery of Preston, Amos Doolittle, Ezekiah Hetchkiss and Silas Merriman of New Haven, and Isaac Reed of Stamford. Curtis, Early Silver of Connecticut and Its Makers (Meriden, 1913), pp. 84-110, passim.

did wooden clocks represented a development wholly Connecticut's in the eighteenth century. Benjamin Cheney of East Hartford made one of the first about 1745, and that town rapidly became the center for the art.

Cheney ranked first in this line, and probably strongly influenced Eli

Terry,²⁹ in the 1770's which provided the paper for the Courant and most

of the. Besides Cheney, several other clockmakers deserve special recognition.

Seth Young(s), while living at Windsor from 1742 to 1760, made clocks

of rare quality.³⁰ Thomas Harland of England came to Norwich in 1773 the

and for thirty-four years made fine clocks and watches there. His

watches were considered equal to the best English imports,³¹ and he soon

employed ten or twelve hands and made about two hundred watches yearly.³²

Daniel Burnap, eventually the finest craftsman of the group, was set

apprenticed to Harland, after which he set up his own shop in East into

Windsor about 1780.³³ For the Colony as a whole, though, pottery works.

Paper-making in the Colony was inaugurated by Christopher Loffingwell

at Norwich in 1766.³⁴ In 1768 he obtained a bounty from the legislature

of two pence per quire.³⁵ He did not receive colonial aid for long, but

~~continued to operate until he died in 1770.~~

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Nine years later Simon Latorop launched his chocolate mill. Chocolate

³⁰ Daniel Howard, A New History of Old Windsor, Connecticut, pp. 236-237. Hoopes speaks of Seth Youngs of Hartford as the teacher of Cheney, p. 5. A well-known landmark in many Connecticut towns was the grist-mill

³¹ Caulkins, Norwich, p. 603. grain, was ground. These mills were

³² Benjamin T. Marshall, Modern History of New London County, p. 167. Probably this production was attained after the Revolution.

³³ Hoopes, p. 7, quotes Lord Sheffield to this effect.

³⁴ Caulkins, p. 607. Ezra Stiles mentioned it in his Itineraries, p. 470.

³⁵ C. R. XIII, 212-213. The grant was rescinded in May, 1772 (C. R. XIII, 300), p. 300.

did continue to turn out all kinds of paper. He produced about 1300³⁶ reams annually and employed ten or twelve workers. at one-twelfth part of as there were others making paper before and during the Revolution. Ebenezer Watson and Austin Ledyard ran a flourishing paper mill at East Hartford in the 1770's which provided the paper for the Courant and most of the writing paper of the State. It across Mill brook to provide power for glass-making was almost unknown in Connecticut as in the other colonies.³⁷ In May, 1747 Thomas Darling of New Haven petitioned for the sole right to make glass which he was granted for twenty years.³⁸ Apparently, though, he enjoyed no great success, for nearly all glass³⁹ still had to be imported. Pottery making also made slight progress. A pottery plant was set up at Bean Hill in Norwich in 1766 which continued operations far into the next century.⁴⁰ For the Colony as a whole, though, pottery workers seem to have been virtually unknown. As the account Christopher Leffingwell added to his pioneering efforts in paper-making and stocking-weaving with a third "first" in Connecticut, larger manufacturing—the making of chocolate. He commenced operations in 1770. Nine years later Simon Lathrop launched his chocolate mill. Chocolate was then considered a rare delicacy and commanded high prices.⁴¹

A well-known landmark in many Connecticut towns was the grist-mill where the corn, as well as other grain, was ground. These mills were

³⁶ Louis W. Hays, "The First Civil Settlement in Connecticut," Connecticut Magazine, p. 607.

³⁷ John A. Powell, "Stamford, 1641-1900," Connecticut Magazine, VI, 216. Bishop, p. 239 quotes Lord Sheffield to this effect.

³⁸ Caulkins, p. 608. Ezra Stiles mentioned it in his Itineraries, p. 170.

³⁹ Caulkins, p. 608, 132-133.

the subject of regulation as early as March, 1658 (59), and March, 1663 (63). At the latter time the miller's toll was set at one-twelfth part of each bushel of corn, and one-sixteenth part of other grains.⁴⁰

Certainly the mill formed a vital cog in the economic life of most towns, and it was often the first industry established. In Wethersfield, for example, in 1637 a dam was built across Mill Brook to provide power for Leonard Chester's grist mill. This is said to have been the first dam built in Connecticut.⁴¹ In Stamford the grist mill started in 1642

was the most important single business enterprise in the town.⁴² Finally,

Waterbury manufacturing began in 1680 with Stephen Hopkin's grist mill.⁴³

The typical mill located on a small stream was subject to floods and draughts which often seriously interfered with or stopped operations.

Hence the earnings of a miller fluctuated considerably. Most of the earlier mills were undershot in type, built cheaply upon a small stream,

designed simply for small-scale grinding of the family grain. As the

country was cleared, many streams became more irregular in their flow⁴⁴

with long dry periods common in the summer. As population grew, larger

mills were required. Slowly now and larger mills of the overshot type

were set up on the larger streams.⁴⁵ Fortunately, Connecticut abounded

with splendid sites, especially on the Thames and Housatonic River systems.

Waterbury, Corraline, Wethersfield, Stamford, Easton, and

⁴⁰ C. R. I, 331, 393.

Abel Cull of New Haven; James Cole of Hartford; Major Jonathan Otis

⁴¹ Louis W. Hicks, "The First Civil Settlement in Connecticut," Connecticut Magazine, VII, 226.

⁴² Julie A. Powell, "Stamford, 1641-1900," Connecticut Magazine, VI, 216.

⁴³ Florence West, "Waterbury: Its Prominent Interests and People," Connecticut Magazine, VII, 133.

⁴⁴ Bishop, *ftn.* pp. 132-133.

The miller ranked as an important figure in colonial and revolutionary Connecticut life.

It is assumed that the silversmiths already were playing a

significant part in the fine art of fashioning gold, silver and precious stones.

Connecticut could boast of an early start, though on a small scale, as

the local demand for such articles was too small to provide full-time

work for the silversmith. Hence, many of them supplemented their meager

incomes by making clocks and cabinets, inkkeeping, etc. Moreover, the

silversmiths of New York, Boston and Newport held a higher reputation

so that wealthy Connecticut people tended to patronize them.⁴⁵ Actually,

some of the Connecticut colonial silversmiths did excellent work with a

"uniform and beautiful surface ... that [could] never be attained by a

modern workman using a buffing wheel."⁴⁶

The earliest known silversmith in Connecticut seems to have been

John Prince of Milford who died in 1703. René Grignon of Merwich who

worked in Merwich from 1708 until his death in 1715 was the second

silversmith, and he left his tools to Daniel Deacon who became a leading

silversmith at New London.⁴⁷

Altogether approximately ninety silversmiths were active in

Connecticut in the period ending with the close of the Revolutionary War.

Among the most skilled silversmiths may be listed Captain Robert

Fairchild, Cornelius Kierstead, Timothy Bantecan, Richard Cutler, and
Abel Buell of New Haven; James Tilley of Hartford; Major Jonathan Otis

of Middletown; Thomas Harland of Merwich; Daniel Deacon, John and

Bishop, of New Britain; and John and William of New Britain.

⁴⁵ George M. Curtis, pp. 45-46.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 16.
C. M. XIII, 273.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 47-48.
Ibid., p. 213.

Samuel Gray, Captain Pygan Adams, and John Gardner of New London.⁴⁸

Hence it can be assumed that the silversmiths already were playing a significant part in establishing Connecticut's growing reputation for fine craftsmanship.

Joseph Hopkins of Waterbury, about 1780 established a silversmith shop. He made silver sleeves and vest buttons, plated knee and shoe buckles; and other plated ware.⁴⁹ population and wealth, there is reason to believe that the silversmith of Killingworth. When (Clinton), was well-known in this line. About 1788 he built what was probably the first lapidary machine in the country, and he advertised its merits to the general assembly.⁵⁰ constitutes another "first" for Connecticut. His inventive genius extended also to type-making and a type-foundry. He secured aid in 1789 from the legislature for the foundry and launched the business in New Haven⁵¹ where he employed fifteen or twenty hands. The enterprise lasted for a few years, but not through the war.⁵² Iron tanning, shoe-making and saddlery held an important place in the economic picture, although very little material is available about them. Almost from the beginning of the Colony, legislative enactments reflected strong interest in the occupation. In February, 1640 (41) it was ordered promulgated. Bristol was, for example, one of the new centers of the

industry. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-79, *passim*. About forty towns had one or more silversmiths in this period. New Haven led with seventeen, followed by New London with twelve, Hartford with eleven, and Norwich with eight.

⁴⁹ C. R. I, 60.

⁵⁰ Bishop, I, 619. Also, A. B. Underwood "Manufacturing Interests of Housatuck Valley" in Davis, New England States, II, 894.

⁵¹ Bishop, p. 7819.

⁵² Hicks, loc. cit., p. 226.

C. R. XIII, 273.

⁵³ Malcolm Keir, Manufacturing Industries in America (New York, 1920), p. 8752.

Bishop, p. 213.

⁵⁴ Epiphreditus Peak, History of Bristol (Hartford, 1932), p. 131.

that the skins of cows and goats be preserved for the tanners.⁵³ Other acts for encouragement and inspection of leather manufactures succeeded in frequent order throughout the early colonial period.⁵⁴ For example, in 1692 complaint was made that "bad leather [was] wrought up to y^e greates wrong of y^e buyer thereof." The leather inspectors therefore were empowered to search for, seize, and dispose of such inferior *Calla* leather.⁵⁵ As the Colony grew in population and wealth,⁵⁶ there is reason to believe that the making of leather goods expanded considerably. When Washington visited Wethersfield, in 1781, he visited a tannery there and evinced much interest in it.⁵⁸ The making of tin-ware in America constitutes another "first" for Connecticut. Two brothers, Edward and William Pattison, natives of Ireland, came to Berlin, Connecticut in 1740 and founded there a tinware business. They purchased their supplies at Boston from tin cargoes carried in from Cornwall, England; and at Berlin they dipped hammered iron sheets into molten tin to produce tin goods for which there was a ready market. They were, thus, the original "Yankee tin peddlers."⁵⁷ Others in Connecticut, fired by the success of the Pattison brothers, entered the field and established Connecticut's reputation for her prominence. Bristol was, for example, one of the new centers of the industry.⁵⁸

Section, II, 51.

⁵³C. R. I, 60.

Margaret A. Martin, *Manufactures and Trade of the Connecticut River*

⁵⁴C. R. I, 75; 239; 285-287; 298-99, 377; II, 325; III, 14, 23, 236; IV, 74-75; VI, 123.

⁵⁵Id., p. 47.

⁵⁶C. R. IV, 74-75.

⁵⁷Hicks, *loc. cit.*, p. 226.

⁵⁸Malcolm Neil, *Manufacturing Industries in America* (New York, 1920), p. 37.

⁵⁹Ephremitus Peck, *History of Bristol* (Hartford, 1932), p. 131.

In the period between Queen Anne's War and King George's War a new industry became important in Connecticut.⁵⁹ This was the distilling of rum. Throughout the Colony the popularity of rum was growing mightily; and, in addition, an external market had developed.⁶⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, to find Barnabas Deane of Wethersfield writing his brother that "We Distill Sixty thousand Gall^s. of Rum a Year & import the Molass[es] to make it from."⁶¹ The poor heating of colonial homes and the severity of Connecticut winters doubtless pointed up the heating qualities of the drink! Distilling apparently was done both on the coasts and inland, and enlisted much enthusiasm and capital.⁶²

The famous copper mines at Simsbury and Wallingford provided the raw materials for the manufacture of copper coins and implements. Joseph Higby, a blacksmith of Granby, making use of the nearby mines, turned out copper coins in the 1730's.⁶³

The chief producer of copper goods was Abel Buell whose copper found a market not only in Connecticut but also in neighboring colonies as well. He personally peddled his dies and coins, and did a lively business. Connecticut probably coined more copper than any other Colony.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Woodcock, II, 501.
Hartford, New York, Massachusetts and Virginia.

⁶⁰ Margaret E. Martin, Merchants and Trade of the Connecticut River Valley (Northampton, 1930), p. 95.

⁶¹ Keir, p. 86.
Based upon Champion's review of Lord
⁶² Bishop, p. 510. as an American Commerce.

⁶³ P. G. Markham, "Early Coinage of Money in Connecticut," Connecticut Magazine, VII, 385.

Shipbuilding commanded large investments and the labor of a goodly number of persons in colonial Connecticut. The growth of population and of production of goods for foreign and domestic markets, and the increased demand for foreign goods stimulated shipbuilding in the eighteenth century. The industry was quite decentralized with nearly every good seaport or river port engaged to a greater or lesser extent.

According to one study, Connecticut ranked third in tonnage built in the colonies in 1769. The colonies stood as follows:⁶⁴

Rank	Colony	Tonnage	Vessels Built	Average Tonnage (one fifth added)
1	Massachusetts	8013	137	70
2	New Hampshire	2452	43	66
3	Connecticut	1542	50	38
4	Pennsylvania	1469	22	79
5	Rhode Island	1428	39	43
6	Maryland	1344	20	30
7	Virginia	1289	27	56
8	New York	953	19	60
9	South Carolina	789	12	78
10	North Carolina	607	12	60
11	Jersey	83	4	25
12	Georgia	50	2	30

In the two decades just preceding the Revolution. Moreover, the average

The record of vessels registered at New Haven from June 3, 1763 to June 2, 1767 contains suggestive data. Thirty-three ships ranging in tonnage from fifteen to one hundred and twenty were built as follows: nine at New Haven, seven at Branford, five at Fairfield, three at Guilford, and one each at Derby, Saybrook, Milford, Stratford, Norwalk, Nantucket, New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia.⁶⁵

Shipbuilding first appears in the Colonial Records for 1640 in a

⁶⁴ Bishop, pp. 80-81. Based upon Champion's review of Lord Sheffield's Observations on American Commerce.

⁶⁵ Forty vessels with about ninety men are not included in this total in Record of All Ships and Vessels Registered at New Haven, 1763-1766.

notice that Governor Hopkins had undertaken the completion of a vessel to be dispatched for "Cotton weall."⁶⁶ In 1666 two positive steps to encourage ship construction were taken. All vessels upon the stocks were exempted from taxation.⁶⁷ In second place, all ships of thirty tons or more were to be free from taxes always.⁶⁸

There seems to have been a slow but steady increase in the shipping of the Colony. This table, based upon replies to the Board of Trade, gives the general picture, although it probably errs on the side of understatement.

done at the different ports. New London took the lead at the start,⁷³
Growth of Shipping in Connecticut⁶⁹
 and it remained a major factor throughout the colonial period.⁷⁴

Growth of Shipping in Connecticut⁶⁹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Vessels</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Number of Seamen</u>
1730	42	1305	1
1750	74	3202	415
1761	114	3527	651
1774	160	10317	1162

good idea of the distribution of shipping. New London and New Haven stood highest with five; followed by Norwich, Guilford, and Hartford with four; Saybrook and Stratford with three; Greenwich, Milford, Middletown, and Killingworth with two; and Branford, Fairfield, Haddam, Norwalk, Lyme, and Wethersfield with one. The ships varied in size from the Sleep of ten tons to the "brigantoon" Delphin of eighty tons.⁷¹ In 1766 the largest vessels reported, the Lion, and the Leopard, reached only ninety tons.⁷² A hand sawyer.⁷⁸

It is difficult to assess the relative importance of the shipbuilding done at the different ports. New London took the lead at the start,⁷³ and it remained among the most important throughout the colonial period.⁷⁴ New Haven ranked high, as did Guilford, Saybrook, and Stratford among the coastal towns. Up the Connecticut River, Middletown was forging to the front;⁷⁵ but Essex, Middle Haddam, Glastenbury, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and Hartford also had active shipwrights.⁷⁶ On the Thames, Norwich was the scene of ship construction. Probably every town in the Colony, located on water of any importance, saw some shipbuilding done.

For example, a sawmill was set up in 1741 by Thomas ... and another

⁷¹ C. R. VII, 682-683.

⁷² C. R. X, 625.
Boughton, p. 33.

⁷³ Bishop, p. 50.
Hartford, p. 245.

⁷⁴ C. M. Halloway, "Old Whaling Port," Connecticut Magazine, III, 206.
C. R. I, 245.

⁷⁵ History of Middlesex County, p. 72. Modern Portland is included with Middletown.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 354; Carl F. Price, Yankee Township (East Hampton, Connecticut, 1941), pp. 65-66; Alonzo B. Chapin, Glastenbury (Hartford, 1853), p. 126; Roger M. Griswold, "First Sailing Vessels and Merchant Mariners on the Connecticut River," Connecticut Magazine, I, 464, 467; Henry Stiles, History of Ancient Wethersfield (New York, 1904), I, 897.
J. S. 181.

Although the vessels of the eighteenth century seem very small to modern eyes, each of them represented a sizeable investment. For example, a ninety-seven ton schooner built at Hartford by John Filley in 1750 cost £4840:06:09, a very large sum for these days.⁷⁷ Greater Horton of Goshen, 201. Sawmills formed an integral part of the manufacturing scene in colonial Connecticut. Timber was plentiful and the need for sawyers, pressing. One mill operator, in colonial times, could do about twenty times the work of a hand sawyer.⁷⁸ Connecticut colonial towns were the 200. Sawmills appeared quite early in Connecticut. In September, 1653 the legislature gave John Winthrop "liberty to find out a place for the setting up a saw mill where it may not prejudice the plantations or farms already given out."⁷⁹ As the years passed, a number of sawmills were erected at favorable stream sites throughout the Colony. On the Mahantick River and nearby streams, mills were built by Fitz-John Winthrop and John Prentiss in the 1690's, and by Colonel John Livingston and Samuel Weller and Son in 1713 and 1721 respectively.⁸⁰ The first sawmill in a town usually appeared soon after its founding. In Rockville, for example, a sawmill was set up in 1740 by Thomas Johns,⁸¹ and another by a Mr. Wolcott in 1744.⁸² The manufacture of goods for slowly-growing

⁷⁷ Stoughton, p. 33.

⁷⁸ Nettels, p. 245. II. Living

⁷⁹ C. R. I, 246. Connecticut leaders suffered from the delusion

⁸⁰ Bishop, I, 103.

⁸¹ Middlebrook, I, 201; Taylor, p. 31; Pauline, pp. 306-309.
B. L. Burr, "The City of Rockville," Connecticut Magazine, VI, 61-62. Middlebrook, I, 201.

⁸² Harry C. Smith, "Centennial of Vernon," Connecticut Magazine, XII, 181.

The gunsmith was an important personage in the life of the antithrop townspeople, though very little has been written about him. Nearly every town had at least one gunsmith. Typical among the eighteenth-century gunsmiths were Benoni Hills, John Doud and Ebenezer Horton of Goshen, Ezekiah Huntington of Windham, Timothy Green of East Haddam Landing, Silas Phelps of Lebanon, and Samuel Hoxes of Norwich. When the war came, the gunsmith became a vital cog in the drive for victory.⁸³

Other important figures in the Connecticut colonial town were the cooper and the blacksmith. Here again at least one or two were needed in every village, yet the demand did not amount to enough to necessitate a large number of full-time workers. The coming of the war produced an immediate need for more work in the blacksmith line. Such men as William Lox, master blacksmith and wheelwright of Norwich, almost immediately found themselves overwhelmed by the need for their help in producing war supplies.⁸⁴ Goshen, located near Salisbury and plentiful iron supplies, had twenty-eight blacksmiths active during the war.⁸⁵

The general picture of manufacturing in colonial Connecticut takes the form largely of home manufactures for the household plus a diversified, small-scale, and widely-scattered manufacture of goods for slowly-growing local, inter-colonial, and foreign markets, to prevent it from flooding constantly, which discouraged further development.⁸⁶ There were other

II. Mining

⁸³ C. C. S., I, 507.

From the beginning Connecticut leaders suffered from the delusion
C. C. S., I, 104, 105, 304, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

⁸⁴ A. G. Hibbard, History of the Town of Goshen (Hartford, 1897), pp. 370-371; Middlebrook, I, 201; Bayles, p. 71; Caulkins, pp. 388-389.

⁸⁵ Middlebrook, I, 201.

⁸⁶ Middlebrook, I, 201.

⁸⁷ Middlebrook, I, 201.

⁸⁸ Hibbard, p. 371.

⁸⁹ Middlebrook, I, 201.

that the Colony contained valuable mineral deposits. Governor Winthrop himself prospected in many sections for minerals, and did find varied deposits.⁸⁶ With the exception of the Salisbury iron mines, Connecticut colonial mining comprised a sad story of great hopes and great disappointments. Although Connecticut's mineral resources were not generally important, brief attention should be given to the state of mining, but the enterprise failed to produce large profits.⁹²

Copper deposits early excited the hopes of mining promoters. In 1707 a company was organized to work the mine at Granby. Despite early encouragement from the legislature in 1709 and later and changes of management, the mines proved unprofitable.⁸⁷ As Trumbull expressed it, "The mine at Simsbury was dug until the veins of copper ceased. A very prodigious cavity was made, which has since become the famous prison, called Newgate. This has been of much greater advantage to the state than all the copper dug out of it."⁸⁸ The report to the Board of Trade in 1762 summed up the matter accurately: "Some copper mines have been in divers parts of the Colony opened, but after considerable expense and labour proving unprofitable became wholly neglected."⁸⁹ There was a rich deposit of copper near Wallingford which was opened up soon after the Granby one, but it proved impossible to prevent it from flooding constantly, which discouraged further development.⁹⁰ There were other

E. H. Hilbert, "Copper Mining in Connecticut," *Connecticut*

⁸⁶ C. C. S., I, 505.

⁹² Schairer, p. 104; Hilbert, pp. 173-174.

⁸⁷ C. R. V, 104, 154, 285, 323; VI, 84-87, 371; C. C. S. I, 506-508. Richard H. Phelps, Newgate of Connecticut (Hartford, 1901), pp. 15-17. Bishop, I, 508-509.

⁸⁸ Trumbull, II, 25.

⁸⁹ C. R. XI, 630.

⁹⁰ Trumbull, II, 25-26. County, p. 315.

scattered deposits at Trumbull, Orange, Terrington, and Whigville—all in operation at one time or another in the eighteenth century.⁹¹

One of the most unusual mining ventures was that at Cobalt at the foot of Great Hill in East Hampton. In 1762 a German chemist, Dr. John Stephanney discovered the cobalt deposits. In 1770 he joined with John Knool and Geminus Eskelens in mining the cobalt. All the ore was metal exported, but the enterprise failed to produce large profits.⁹²

The best available lead mine was located just south of Middletown near the Harrows in Connecticut River. Apparently it was worked early in the colonial period, and then was abandoned for many years.⁹³ The dire need for lead prompted its reopening at the start of the Revolution. Great expectations were held of its usefulness, but, unfortunately, they were only very partially realized.⁹⁴ Lead was mined also near Union, for the Council of Safety in April, 1776 appointed a committee to procure "four hundred weight of black lead" to be used at the Salisbury cannon works.⁹⁵

Mining

Stone for building purposes was found at several places in the Colony. Probably the most important quarry developed was that of brownstone at East Middletown (Portland). About 1665 the first use was made of it, and in 1726 the selectmen of the town assumed charge.⁹⁶

⁹¹ B. M. Hulbert, "Copper Mining in Connecticut," Connecticut Quarterly, III, 23-32.

⁹² See to Rev. Thomas Prince, Collections of the Schairer, p. 108; Price, pp. 158-159.

⁹³ C. C. S., I, 505.

⁹⁴ See pp. 232-233.

⁹⁵ C. R., XV, 262.

⁹⁶ History of Middlesex County, p. 516.

The brownstone was used heavily locally, and also carried as far away as Boston for buildings and tombstones.⁹⁷

September 9, 1641 ordering Governor Far and away the most significant mining done was that for iron in northwestern Connecticut, to which reference has already been made.⁹⁸

"Salisbury" here, as it was called, rated at the top among American iron until well into the nineteenth century. The ore gave a ton of pig metal for every two to two and one-half tons of ore; and a ton of bar iron for four tons. The toughness of the iron quickly became famous. For the first sixty years 2000 tons annually on the average was extracted from

the Salisbury mines.⁹⁹

With the outbreak of the Revolution the need for cannon and other iron implements of war immediately became critical. The Salisbury iron mines and furnaces attained an importance unequalled by any other iron center in the country.¹⁰⁰

A fairly frequent type of fisheries legislation involved the grant of sole right to an individual Fishing to fish a certain area. For

example, in October, 1733, John Loring and five others of Middletown. Fishing was an occupation of some importance in colonial Connecticut. The earliest settlers came to a fisherman's paradise. The rivers, lakes and the Sound teemed with a variety of fish, while along the shores lobsters, oysters, clams, and shell fish abounded.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Extracts of Letters to Rev. Thomas Prince, Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, III, 279.

⁹⁸

See pp. 78-81.

⁹⁹ See pp. 138-139; Needon, II, 748.

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Trumbull, II, 81.

¹⁰¹

See pp. 204-215.

See III, 248; XIV, 82-83.

¹⁰¹ Trumbull, I, 21.

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Legislation concerning fishing recurs frequently throughout the colonial era. It began with a resolve of September 9, 1641 ordering Governor John Haynes, Mr. Phelps, and Captain Mason to negotiate with Mr. Fenwick "concerning liberty for making salt in Long Island and taking fishes."¹⁰² Soon thereafter sole whaling privileges were bestowed upon a Mr. Whiting for two years.¹⁰³ Apparently, however, whaling never won many adherents in Connecticut, unlike Massachusetts.¹⁰⁴ Then, as now, the methods employed in fishing had to be regulated. This need called forth the first comprehensive fisheries act, that of May, 1715 "to prevent Nuisances by Hedges, Weares and other Incumbrances, obstructing the passage of Fish in Rivers." Such devices were forbidden on the Quinabang, Sheutskot and Windsor Ferry River.¹⁰⁵ The same prohibition was extended to the Housatenio River and its tributaries in May, 1764, and reaffirmed by an act of May, 1773.¹⁰⁶ A fairly frequent type of fisheries legislation involved the grant of sole right to an individual or a group to fish a certain area. For example, in October, 1730 Jabez Hamlin and five others of Middletown petitioned for exclusive fishing rights at a place in the Connecticut River near the mouth of the Little (Sebetha) River which they had cleared at "great pains and expence." The general assembly approved a

Similar acts are found in C. R. IX, 684; XII, 277.

¹⁰² C. R. I, 68.

¹⁰³ C. R. I, 154.

¹⁰⁴ Carman, pp. 158-159. Wooden, II, 748.

¹⁰⁵ C. R. V, 506. VII, 225.

¹⁰⁶ C. R. XII, 248; XIV, 62-63; the New York Historical Society, IX, 456.

ten-year grant.¹⁰⁷

CHAPTER VI

In 1766 the legislature found it wise to pass an act "for the Preservation of Oysters and Clams" which vested in the individual towns on the coast power to make local regulations.¹⁰⁸ From the earliest times enormous quantities of salmon and shad went filled the waters of the Connecticut River. Yet, strangely enough, not even the salmon were greatly prized until near the end of the colonial period. Shad ranked next to the salmon in importance, and large amounts of it were salted away for home consumption and lesser amounts for export.¹⁰⁹ The export of alewives apparently proved profitable in Wethersfield and other river towns.¹¹⁰ The War seriously interfered with fishing activities, less was done, and much that was caught for export could not be sent out due to the British blockade.¹¹¹ Hence one can assume that most of the fishing was done for consumption by the individual fisherman and his family.

Hickson probably drew up the terms in his final petition to the King, and they apparently were substantially adopted. Essentially, the Charter placed the royal stamp of approval upon what had been done by the colonists.

The Colony continued to elect a governor, deputy governor, and twelve assistants. They were chosen by the "freemen," the men, twenty-one years

or older. C. R. VII, 303. Similar acts are found in C. R. IX, 494; XIV, 42-43, 233-234.

there was maintained a house of representatives with two deputies chosen

by each town. C. R. XII, 500-501, as popularly referred to as the "lower house"

in C. R. XII, 718-719, or "upper house." The power of the general

assembly to make laws was limited for the first time by the phrase "not contrary to the laws of England." But there was no requirement that the

Deane Papers, Collections of the New York Historical Society, III, 486.

a situation of which the colonists took full advantage.

Elections were held once yearly on the second Thursday in May after which the general assembly met. The Political Organization The basis of Connecticut's government at the outbreak of the Revolution was provided by the Charter of 1662. John Winthrop, Jr., went to England in 1661 to carry an address of loyalty to King Charles II and seek confirmation of the colony's privileges.¹ Although the Puritan cause was generally unpopular in England at the time, Winthrop and Connecticut had powerful friends at Court, including Lord Saye and Sele, so that a very favorable charter was obtained. Under the Charter of 1662 Connecticut became a corporate colony by royal decree with authority vested in the governor and company. For the first time the relationship of the people of Connecticut to the sovereign was carefully described. The provisions of the Charter were built upon the first frame of Connecticut's government, the Fundamental Orders of 1636 and laws passed from that time to 1661. Winthrop probably drew up the terms in his final petition to the King, and they apparently were substantially adopted. Essentially, the Charter placed the royal stamp of approval upon what had been done by the colonists. The Colony continued to elect a governor, deputy governor, and twelve assistants. They were chosen by the "freemen," the men, twenty-one years or older, who had been admitted to full political rights. In addition, there was maintained a house of representatives with two deputies chosen by each town, which body was popularly referred to as the "lower house" in contrast to the assistants, or "upper house." The power of the general assembly to make laws was limited for the first time by the phrase "not contrary to the laws of England." But there was no requirement that the Colony send its laws to England for royal confirmation or disallowance. A large number of special sessions were held during the war. The first was convened only a week after Lexington and Concord.

and respect, but very little power. He had no vote power, no patronage, little influence upon legislation, and no right of pardon. He received a very small salary and a stingy expense allowance.³ He had certain customary or prescribed duties, such as opening the meetings of the general assembly, and the like. Thus, it is obvious that his position, in itself, carried small weight in colonial affairs; and only the circumstances of war enabled Governor Stratfull to assume a position of great power. This power was exercised through leadership of the council of safety, a wartime emergency group, and through the confidence in him inspired by his unflinching patriotism. In the electoral system whereby members of the general assembly, without question, exercised the supreme power in Connecticut. It controlled both the executive and the judicial branches of the government; and, in general, enjoyed practically unlimited powers since the charter failed to define them in precise terms. Of course, it was not supposed to enact laws contrary to those of England; but the legislators appear to have worried little about English law or opinions and to have interpreted their powers in a very broad manner.⁴ The general assembly handled various petitions annually which today would be handled entirely by the court system; and it even had a large voice in the military affairs of the colony. The actual administration of the laws fell, not to the Governor and agents, but to the towns.⁵ In May, 1782. Two of the

³Charles M. Andrews, Connecticut's Place in Colonial History, p. 57.

⁴Occasionally Connecticut was ordered to send its laws to England for examination. They were sent over in 1721, for example, and subjected to careful study by Francis Maser, legal adviser of the Board of Trade. Maser recommended the disallowance of seventy-five out of three hundred and eighty-seven laws, and on the next year there were 114 repeals. Acts were also disallowed in 1741, 1742, 1743 and 1744, but none was disallowed. Charles M. Andrews, Connecticut and the British Empire (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 1), pp. 11-25.

⁵Charles M. Andrews, Connecticut's Place in Colonial History, pp. 33-34.

In 1699 the deputies, or representatives, two from each town, began to meet apart from the assistants, which involved basically a change from a unicameral to a bicameral legislature.⁶ The deputies, referred to henceforth as the lower house, probably represented a somewhat wider range of political, economic, and social interests than did the assistants, or upper house. The deputies came from every town in the state and thus had a much wider geographical distribution, and also included more than the handful of families which dominated the upper house.⁷

The upper house had a conservative static quality which was the natural result of a cleverly devised electoral system whereby members had to be elected by the freemen from a list of twenty men, arranged in a preferential order by the assistants. The top man had to be voted upon first; the next man, second, etc. Whenever the lower house tried to alter this order, it received a firm refusal from the assistants. In the actual balloting at town meetings, moreover, the process consumed so much time that many freemen departed before those in the lower part of the list were voted upon. As a rule, a candidate on the lower rung of the ladder had to wait patiently for a period of four to twelve years, or so, before death or a rare voluntary resignation gave him a good chance of successful election.⁸ For instance, six out of the twelve assistants in office in May 1772, still were in office in May, 1782. Two of the

⁶This was done in accord with an act of October, 1698. C. R. IV, 267. The constitutionality of this act was doubtful. Simon E. Baldwin, "The Early History of the Ballot in Connecticut," *Papers of the American Historical Association*, IV, (October, 1890), 416-417.

⁷Andrews, *Connecticut's Place*, p. 88. Baldwin asserts: "The lower house represented the popular will of the day; the upper house represented the popular will of ten or twenty years [earlier]," p. 417.

⁸Ibid., pp. 417-418.

others, Josiah and Jabez Huntington had been replaced by other members of the same prominent family, Benjamin and Samuel Huntington. Several of the others had died, while William Samuel Johnson had quit his office due to loyalist sympathies. Truly it was a family affair! The six who served throughout the decade, and longer, were Abraham Davenport, Ephraim Dyer, William Pitkin, Roger Sherman, Joseph Spencer, and Oliver Wolcott. The council of safety, as first appointed, contained five assistants, four deputies, and Deputy Governor Griswold, which indicated nicely the large influence of the upper house.

Connecticut may have enjoyed more self-government than any other American colony, but she did not have a democratic type of government. In first place, participation in the government was limited to those who adhered to and supported the established Puritan Church. From the start, the Puritan, or Congregational, Church played an important part in the lives of the people. All inhabitants were taxed for the support of the minister of the established church in the town. In second place, property requirements were constantly maintained for all "freemen," and only "freemen" could vote for town and colony officials. The law was changed from time to time, and the Charter of 1803 did not attempt to regulate this matter. In general, from a very early date in the Colony's history, the age of twenty-one was the minimum to become a freeman. The amount of estate required on the town list varied from time to time.⁹ A resolve of October, 1709 which seems to have held for the remainder of the colonial period, declared that all freemen should have possession of "forty pounds personal estate," and that this valuation was to be computed

⁹ C. R. I, 331, 339, II, 253, IV, 11.

according to the list of the particular year when application was made.¹⁰

Town officials were elected at duly constituted town meetings at which all freemen could participate and vote. The variety and number of town officials elected was impressive. At a town meeting of Middletown on December 3, 1781, for example, the freemen chose the following officials: seven selectmen, a treasurer, nine listers, four constables, a collector of state taxes, two keepers of liquid measures, five "time viewers"(!), three "gaugers," four leather inspectors, seven branders of horses, six pound and keg keepers, two packers of meal, eleven grand jurors, sixteen(!) tithing men, a committee of inspection of twenty-two, two more constables, and a committee of about thirty-five to provide for soldiers' families.¹¹ At other times, Middletown elected a committee to audit town accounts, and surveyors of highways.¹² The town, in turn, controlled the elections for the colony officials. Procedures were outlined by laws passed at different times by the general assembly. According to the last colonial one, that of May, 1740, the freemen were to meet yearly in April in regular town meetings to choose two deputies for the lower house and to vote for Governor, Deputy-Governor, twelve Assistants, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.¹³ The votes for all colony officials were in reality proxies carried by the two deputies to the

¹⁰ The laws provided for election of Governor, Assistants, etc.

¹⁰ C. R. V, 129.

¹¹ Middletown Town Records, Envelope 4.

¹² Ibid. This was the case in December, 1782, for example.

¹³ S. R. VIII, 297. 296, 295-294.

general assembly meeting and east there for the term.¹⁴ This proxy system became almost universal by the early eighteenth century.¹⁵

The only important change made in freeman's qualifications in Connecticut during the Revolutionary War involved the taking of a special oath of allegiance to the new State by all freemen and officials.¹⁶ This measure was aimed at eliminating all Loyalists and "fence-sitters" from participation in the government, which it probably helped to do.

Much has been said already to the effect that the government of the Colony essentially fell into the pattern of control by a narrow circle of well-to-do families and persons. This state of affairs can easily be demonstrated in a more precise manner by examining who held the chief offices at any particular time. For this purpose the persons elected to leading positions of power and responsibility in the spring of 1776 have been tabulated.

Gov. Baldwin	Gov. Baldwin	*
John Williams	John Williams	*
John Wolcott	John Wolcott	*
John Alden	John Alden	*
John Williams	John Williams	*
John Wolcott	John Wolcott	*

¹⁴ The Charter provided for election of Governor, Assistants, etc., at a mass meeting of freemen; but this proved so impractical that the proxy system was substituted. An act of 1740 was entitled "An Act directing when the Freemen in the several Towns in this Colony shall meet in Order to their putting in their Proxies and for the choosing Deputies for to attend the General Assembly in May." C. R. VIII, 297.

¹⁵ Baldwin, p. 417.

¹⁶ S. R. I, 8, 63, 100, 226-227.

Also, one of the two members of the Lower House.

Concentration of Political and Judicial Power in 1776¹⁷

need to add, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Deputy Governor, Secretary,

George H. Lane, Secretary of the State and the Council of Safety.

This table lists the members of the

political power in 1776.

Assistant

(Upper House)

Deputy (Lower House)

Council of Safety¹⁸

Superior Court Judge

County Court Judge

Probate Court Judge

Justice of Peace

Delegate to Congress¹⁹

Abraham Davenport Stamford • of the Upper House, of the Council of Safety.

Alphalet Dyer Windham • of the delegation to Congress, and one of the

members of the Lower House. It would be impossible to list only

members of the Lower House. It would be impossible to list only

members of the Lower House. It would be impossible to list only

Richard Law New London • of the Council of Safety, and

William Pitkin Hartford • of the Council of Safety, and

Elisha Sheldon Salisbury •

Roger Sherman New Haven • of the Council of Safety, and

Joseph Spencer East Haddam • of the Council of Safety, and

William Williams Windham • of the Council of Safety, and

Oliver Wolcott Litchfield • of the Council of Safety, and

Jedidiah Kierstin Windham • of the Council of Safety, and

William Billhouse New London • of the Council of Safety, and

Titus Hosmer²⁰ Middletown • of the Council of Safety, and

Benjamin Huntington Norwich • of the Council of Safety, and

Nathaniel Wales Windham • of the Council of Safety, and

• of the Council of Safety, and

¹⁷This table is based largely upon the elections and appointments recorded for May, 1776. See C. R. IV, 269-279.

¹⁸C. R. IV, 39, 315-316.

¹⁹The delegates to Congress were chosen in October, 1775. Wolcott and Hosmer were alternates.

²⁰Also, one of the two speakers of the Lower House.

To complete the roster of powerful political personalities, one would need to add, of course, Governor Trumbull, Deputy-Governor Griswold, George Wyllis, Secretary of the State, and John Lawrence, Treasurer. This tight little group, only twenty-one men in all, virtually controlled the political destinies of the State. In this list of twenty-one men were found all the members of the Upper House, of the Council of Safety, of the Superior Court, and of the delegation to Congress, and one of the (two) speakers of the Lower House. It would be necessary to add only a few more names to include all of the important political leaders. Perhaps the addition of a dozen or so key figures of the Lower House, such as Comfort Sage of Middletown and Thomas Seymour of Hartford, would fairly well round out the total of the ruling clique of the Colony and State.²¹

During most of the colonial period Connecticut elections were dull affairs. The customary calm was shattered, however, by the Stamp Act and its local repercussions. Governor Thomas Fitch, who had been a popular leader, decided in November, 1765 to take the oath required by the Crown that he enforce observance of the Stamp Act. A majority of the assistants bitterly opposed the action and this marked the beginning of a virtual two-party system for a few years. On the one side was Fitch and his supporters, the "Old Party" who placed loyalty to the Crown first. On the other side were such men as William Pitkin and Jonathan Trumbull, the "Eastern Party," who were determined to resist all British moves.

²¹ John Adams summarized the Connecticut political situation very aptly: "The State of Connecticut has always been governed by an aristocracy, more decisively than the empire of Great Britain is. Half a dozen, or at most a dozen families, have controlled that country when a colony, as well as since it has been a state." C. F. Adams, Works of John Adams, VI, 530.

toward greater control of the Colony. Considerable interest was shown in the next election at which Pitkin was chosen governor. After Pitkin's death in 1769, Fitch's party waged a spiritual campaign to return Fitch once more to the gubernatorial chair. The contest in the winter and spring of 1770 proved a very lively affair in which Fitch's Stamp Act support was thrown up against him, and Trumbull's mercantile failures, against him. Under the surface, however, lay the deeper issues inherent in the divergent conservative and radical viewpoints upon the question of imperial relationships. The "Old Party's" strength was concentrated west of the Connecticut River; that of the "Eastern Party" across the River to the east.²² The outcome was close enough so that no candidate received a majority, but the general assembly proceeded to elect Trumbull. Within a couple of years the "Old Party's" strength began to wane and Trumbull's reelection became a mere formality.²³

Brief notice must be taken finally of a war emergency organization, the council of safety. It arose out of the obvious need for a special body which could handle day-to-day problems during the long intervals when the general assembly was not in session. This body was set up by a resolve passed in May, 1775, and it functioned until October 28, 1783. During this period, Governor Trumbull convened the body for about 1200 meetings, mostly held at Lebanon. The council was given large discretionary powers to handle all necessary problems concerning troops, execution of legislative resolves, supplies, finances, etc., which might

²² See pp. 20-21, 26. For a more detailed account of the contest, see the account by Charles M. Andrews, *Connecticut's Place in Colonial History*, pp. 35-36.

²³ Jonathan Trumbull, *Jonathan Trumbull* (Boston, 1919), pp. 77-82. Charles M. Andrews points out the fact that opposition to the Crown after 1763 was centered in eastern Connecticut (the area of modern Tolland and Windham Counties), *Connecticut's Place in Colonial History*, pp. 35-36.

arise and require speedy action. Five or more out of the ten members constituted a quorum, and the members were paid eight shillings daily for attendance.²⁴ Through its constant labors the council of safety contributed vastly to Connecticut's war effort. In the economic sphere, its interpretation and oversight of the regulatory laws gave it a position of decisive importance.

Connecticut's system of colonial government can be characterized, then, as one of self-government based, first upon the Fundamental Orders of 1639, and next upon the Charter of 1662. In no sense did Connecticut have a democratic type of government. The ruling power was highly concentrated in the hands of a small group of the "godly," or the approved freemen, who ruled in behalf of the other freemen and their families.²⁵ Connecticut's governmental organization proved to be the most enduring of all the Puritan systems, as it was not given up until 1818; and it functioned with remarkable efficiency and a large degree of popular support.

²⁴ S. R. XV, 39, 315-316. Similar bodies had been set up in earlier intercolonial wars. For example, a council of war was established in October, 1703 during Queen Anne's War. S. R. IV, 442, 535.

²⁵ Andrews, *Colonial Period*, II, 142 fn. Andrews points out that a galaxy of false claims in behalf of Connecticut's colonial government have been made such as that the Fundamental Orders were the first written constitution, and that they became a model for later constitutions, etc. Neither did Connecticut have modern democracy in any sense, nor a system peculiarly different from the other New England colonies. Many scholars have deluded themselves by studying the Fundamental Orders and Connecticut government in general out of its Puritan setting; but it can be understood properly only in that setting. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143 fn.

practice, a forerunner of the **CHAPTER VII**ier was sporadic and

intellectual. The virtual accession to power of Walpole in 1721 ushered

British Regulation of Trade Prior to 1763

in an era of British colonial trade regulations in

British colonial trade regulations were numerous and, on the surface, quite restrictive. They found their roots in mercantilistic theory which was widely accepted by British leaders in the seventeenth century and found expression in the Navigation Acts. By and large, the ideal of a self-sufficient Empire remained firmly fixed in the center of the mercantilist program. The colonies were thought of chiefly as sources of supply for raw materials, and as markets to absorb English finished goods—an arrangement particularly profitable to the Mother Country.

Severe restraints upon American colonial trade were involved in the British colonial system. These restrictions began with the Navigation Act of 1651 and were widely expanded during the next century through such acts as those of 1661, 1663, 1673, 1696, 1706, 1722, and 1763. All trade of the colonies was to be carried in English ships, English-manned. A list of enumerated articles was set up which could be shipped from the colonies only to England, but there was widespread disobedience of this provision. Direct trade from New England to Continental Europe continued as a small but flourishing business throughout the colonial period.

Except for the attempt at rigorous control exhibited in the short-lived Dominion of New England, English commercial and political policy toward the New England colonies can be classed as lenient for the entire period from 1620 to 1763, or so. It is true that from time to time new trade restrictions were laid down such as the naval stores, Bounty Acts of 1706 and 1729, and the addition of rice (1706), copper ore, beaver skins and other furs (1722) to the enumerated list; but, in actual

practice, enforcement of these and earlier acts was sporadic and ineffectual. The virtual accession to power of Walpole in 1714 ushered in an era of increased laxness in administration of colonial affairs in general, which was heightened, if anything, under the Duke of Newcastle and his self-styled policy of "salutary neglect." Even during this period of general laxness, however, Parliament passed several significant trade acts of which the Molasses Act of 1733 affected Connecticut most. This act bade fair, if carefully enforced, to cause heavy losses to New Englanders in their West Indian trade. Their answer was the customary one—evasion of the duties by large-scale smuggling. The Molasses Act was not permitted to interfere with the highly profitable trade with the French West Indian Islands which offered cheaper sugar and molasses, and higher prices for New England goods than could be obtained in the British West Indies. Little of Connecticut's trade was very small, but it was a serious

By and large, British policies for the regulation of colonial trade, mercantilistic in theory and in law, were largely vitiated in their effectiveness by the inefficient, careless administration of British officials in England and America, and by clever but determined evasion by the Americans. New Englanders ranked in the forefront of the skillful evaders—needless to say.¹ Many of the goods were very coarse. Not much was available for purchase of luxuries; nor was it absolutely necessary to supplement one's own efforts beyond a very small total of products. These could be bought from a nearby local storekeeper, who very often

¹The ideas expressed in this section are based upon extensive reading in a variety of sources of which the most important were: Charles M. Andrews, The Colonial Period of American History, Vol. IV, passim, Everts B. Greene, The Revolutionary Generation, passim, Leonard W. Labaree, Royal Government in America, passim, and Curtis P. Nettels, The Roots of American Civilization, passim.

such as corn, wheat, rye, **CHAPTER VIII** butter, tallow, lard, flaxseed, beeswax, hoops, headings, shaves, horses, calves, cattle, hogs, sheep.

Local Trade

beans, peas and other vegetables, apples, and cider. He might deal with

From the earliest days of the Connecticut River settlements, trade held a high place in the interests of the people. When the Mohican Indians urged the settlers at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, in 1631, to come to Connecticut, they spoke glowingly of it as a superior place for plantations and trade.¹ Later, when the pioneers came from Massachusetts to Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield, they lost little time in embarking upon trade. From the start, trading instincts were powerful in the "Connecticut Yankees!"

Trade at the local level was unspectacular, yet highly important. Every farmer, willy-nilly, was a trader of sorts. The number who deserved the title of "merchant" was very small, but it would be unwise to limit one's attention to that group.

The families of the late colonial period still operated fundamentally upon a self-sufficiency basis, and purchased as little as possible of what they consumed. Most food and clothing came from the farm. Footwear, the simpler house furniture and furnishings, and farming tools—all were made at home. In an economy where specie was very scarce, not much was available for purchase of luxuries; not was it absolutely necessary to supplement one's own efforts beyond a very small total of products. These could be bought from a nearby local storekeeper, who very often was paid in kind, not cash.

The farmer paid for his goods chiefly with surplus agricultural goods

¹Frederick, I, 12. The Indians promised corn and eighty beaver skins annually.

²Frederick, I, 6.

injustice of fluctuating currency and recommended that the general assembly exclude such uncertain issues from the Colony.⁴ Sherman did not confine his mercantile interests to New Milford, however, for he also established stores in New Haven and in Wallingford before 1760.⁵ Arnold, as a lad, was apprenticed to his uncles, the Lathrops, for druggists of Norwich. Later, with a capital of £2000 provided by the Lathrops, he moved to New Haven to open an apothecary shop at the intersection of Church and George Streets, later moved to Water Street. He stocked a modest amount of general merchandise, and soon was prospering. With his profits, he purchased and built ships and went into the West Indian and Newfoundland trade. He traveled extensively over New England procuring horses and cattle for the West Indian market. Out of the approximate one hundred New Haven ships in foreign trade, Arnold owned three.⁶

A transaction between Bernard Lintol of New Haven and Arnold illustrates well some of the problems involved in colonial local trade. A letter from Lintol to a friend explains the affair.

"I have at length agreed with Mr. Arnold to take ye Sum at 2s/3d lawful per Gallon: also a parcel of Dry Goods at £50 lawful. The Freight Money is also to be paid to me, which I think will reduce the Sum due to about £160 lawful money, of which I can not be certain as I have not yet a particular account of any thing except the Dry Goods."⁷

⁴Roger Sherman Boardman, Roger Sherman (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 37-38.

⁵Ibid., p. 60.

⁶George Hare Ford, "The Early Career of Benedict Arnold," Revolutionary Characters of New Haven, p. 78. Boardman, p. 58.

⁷Ingersoll Papers, C. H. S. C., II, 412.

Hartford Merchants Advertising in the Current in 1773

Merchant	Type of Merchant or Merchandise	Approximate Num- ber of Issues Advertised in	Other Information
E. Austin	articles for goldsmiths and jewelers	12	
Stephen Austin	leather goods	1	
Simeon Beldine	indigo	4	of West Hartford
Aaron Bull	bottles	4	
Caleb Bull, Jr.	clothing, books	6	new store
James Bull	behea tea	6	
Jonathan Bull	English and India goods	4	
John Cable	bakery	6	from Germany
Mrs. Margaret Chaneyard	liquor, Indies goods	3	
Mrs. Collyer	clothing, tea, spices	7	
Daniel Cotton	exchange English goods for woolen shirting	1	location not given
Edward Dodd	rum, brandy, spices	3	
Ezekiel Doolittle	clocks	14	
William Hilery	liquors, chinaware	12	
Thomas Hildrup	watches, repaired and sold	28	sells at Stephen Austin's store
Thomas Hopkins	English and India goods	6	
Amos Jones	beer	2	
William Lawrence	spices, wine, sugar	2	
Hugh Ledlie	rugs, blankets	2	
Stephen Mears	English and India goods	2	
Daniel and George Merrell	leather and English goods	15	
Ezekiah Merrell	books, drugs; wanted potash	11	new store
Selah Norton	West Indies goods	8	East Hartford
Moses Smith	shoes	6	
Smith and Coit	books, drugs; want potash	4	
Abel Stone	leather breeches	3	leaving Hartford
John Thomas	groceries (lemons etc.)	21	
James Tiley	jeweler	12	
Samuel Tiley	rum	4	
William Tiley	metal goods (iron, etc.)	7	
Stephen Turner	leather tanning	2	
Samuel Wesco	dry goods, Indies goods	10	
Smith and Shepherd	English and India goods	4	
George Thowson	European and India goods	2	
Dr. Willis	drugs	10	

Theophilus Morgan of Guilford may be cited as a fairly typical

local merchant. From about 1750 he kept a store on the main street of

Clinton. Upon his death in 1763 his son took over, and he engaged in the

West Indian trade too. Their normal pattern of trade involved the purchase

of cattle, horses, oats, hay, hoops, and staves from nearby farmers for

export purposes. In return, they imported chiefly rum and molasses to

sell to the local people. At the son's death in 1783 he left an estate

which inventoried between £7000 and £8000, considered wealthy for those

days.

One of the best methods of visualizing the nature of local commerce

is through newspaper advertisements. The Connecticut Current, the best

of the four Connecticut papers, provides an excellent picture of the

Hartford merchants and markets.⁹

and Corners	Leather and Building	11	7000 + 1000
all	books, drugs, water, etc.	8	1000 + 1000
and Corners	Leather and Building	4	
all	books, drugs, water, etc.	1	Leaving Hartford
and Corners	Leather and Building	21	
all	books, drugs, water, etc.	17	
and Corners	Leather and Building	1	
all	books, drugs, water, etc.	7	
and Corners	Leather and Building	3	
all	books, drugs, water, etc.	10	

⁹ History of Middlesex County, pp. 232-233.

⁸ Hartford, incidentally, was more favorably located than New Haven, Norwich, or New London as a center for the transshipment of agricultural produce. Bidwell, p. 263.

MIDDLETOWN.

Non-Hartford Merchants Advertising

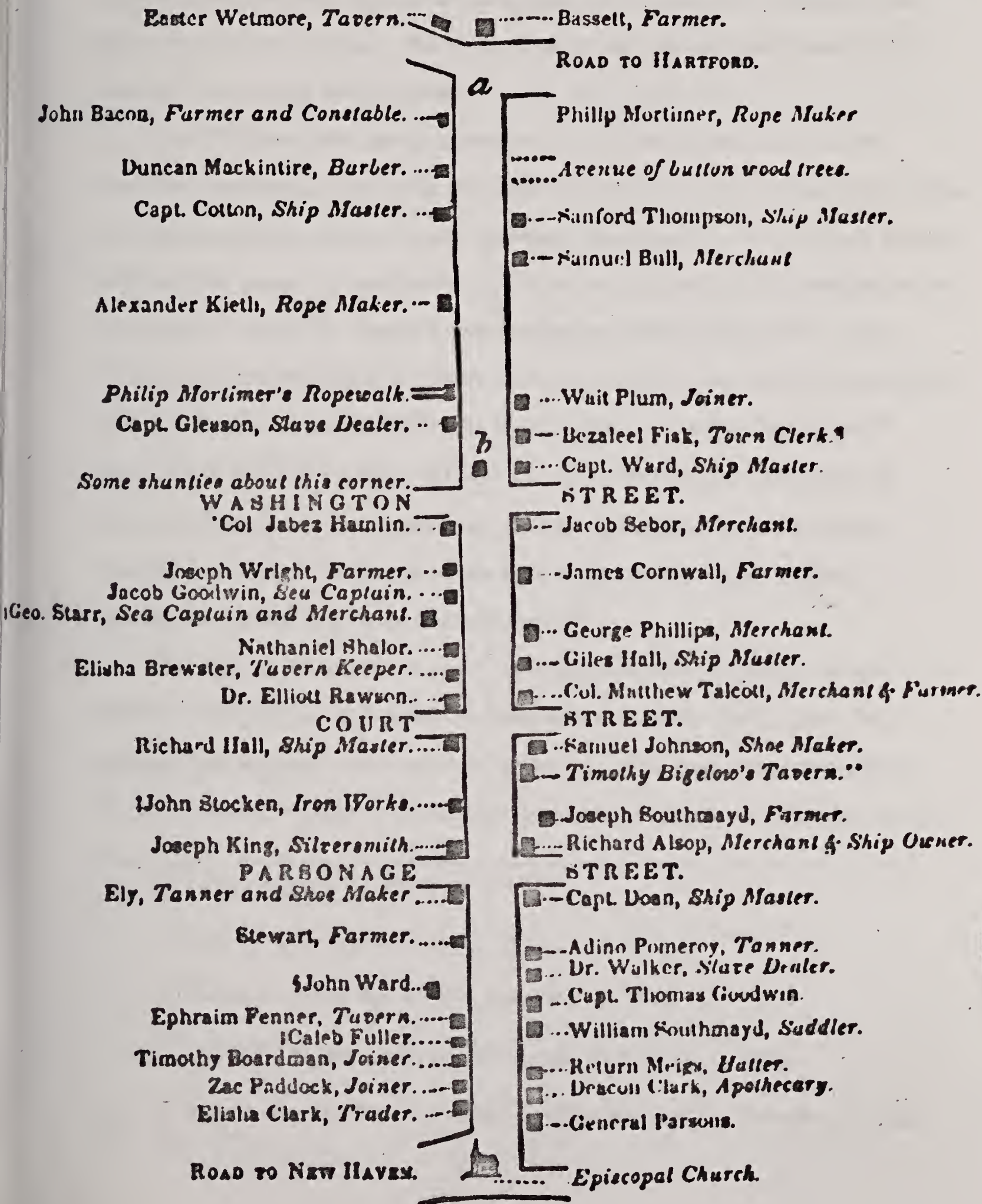
Merchant	Location	Type of Merchant or Merchandise	Approximate Number of Issues Advertised in	Other Information
Ebenezer Backus, Jr.	Norwich	clothing ¹⁰	3	To sell at Hartford
Smith Bailey	East Windsor	goldsmith, jeweler	1	
William Beadle	Wethersfield	clothing	9	new business, "no credit"
Josiah Blaklee	Enfield	English and India goods	5	
Bogardus and Dibble	Sharon	English and India goods	4	
Abraham Bradley	Litchfield	tobacco	3	
Ebenezer Bridgman	(Boston)	crockery	14	Imported from London
John Ellsworth	Middletown	closing out accounts	8	Going to Mississippi
William Griswold	Rocky Hill	European and East Indies goods	2	Direct from London
William Hammett	New York City	anchors	13	
Joseph Hopkins	Waterbury	goldsmith	3	
William Judd	Farmington	European and India goods	3	
John McCurdy	Lyme	wants horses to ship to West Indies	1	
John Rogers	Middletown	drugs	4	
J. Simet	New York City	watches	5	
Smith and Shephard	Sharon	drugs, West India goods	4	
George Thomson	Middletown	European and India goods	2	
Dr. Willis	Middletown	drugs	10	

¹⁰ This term implies chiefly English goods.

MIDDLETOWN.

PLAN OF MAIN STREET, MIDDLETOWN, SHOWING THE BUILDINGS AND OCCUPANTS,
FROM ABOUT 1770 TO 1775.

(By JOSEPH BARRATT, M. D., Middletown, Sept. 1836.)



At least thirty-two Hartford merchants and eighteen outside merchants, therefore, advertised in the Courant in 1773. English and East and West Indies goods made up the chief offerings, but a variety of other goods were advertised as well. The most distant advertisers were located at New York (two) and Boston (one).¹¹ In the dealer's business for which

In 1774 this same group advertised; and, in addition, nine new Hartford merchants, and seven new advertisers from other Connecticut towns were represented. John Skinner in August announced a sale of East Indies and English goods at auction.¹¹ J. Plumb of Middletown had codfish which he wished to sell.¹² Several manufacturers entered the lists, also. Nicholas Brown of Hartford sought customers for his chaises and harnesses; and Ely Warner had undertaken the manufacture of leather breeches.¹³ David Shaw of East Windsor had set up in the Wheelwright business.¹⁴ From New Haven came two interesting advertisements: Isaac Deolittle invited customers to his bell-making establishment, while Kleaser Arnold had recently set up a distillery.¹⁵

How did an important coastal town compare with Hartford in its local trading activity as reflected in comparative advertising? From the Connecticut Gazette, New London's paper, one can gain some comparison. In the month of October, 1774, twelve persons advertised goods or services

¹¹ C. C., August 9, 1774.

¹² January 23; February 1, 8, 1774.

¹³ January 4, 11; May 3, 17; December 5, 1774.

¹⁴ January 11, 18; February 1, 8, 15, 22; March 1, 1774.

¹⁵ August 16, 23, 30; September 6; October 24, 31; November 7, 14, 21, 28, 1774.

¹⁶ October 14, 1774.

for sale, or had want-ads inserted. Ebenezer Dennis made and retailed brass and copper work and David Nevins sold hats,¹⁶ while Timothy Green had in stock Watts Psalms and many other current books. Thomas Coit of Norwich hoped New Londoners would display an interest in his stock of drugs;¹⁷ and Asa Burdham specialized in the saddler's business for which he solicited trade.¹⁸ Season, which he will sell on reasonable

No less than four want-ads are included in this total. John Jacob Brimmer sought beeswax for which he offered cash; Church and Hallam, flaxseed, for salt or cash; Ebenezer Way, Jr., the same; and Ebenezer Douglas, brass and flaxseed for cash.¹⁹

The other advertisements were of a less common type. James Smith wished to sell a small boat. W. Stewart was putting up for sale by auction one-half of the ship Lizard and the other half was being sold privately.²⁰ Of interest with reference to the question of transportation facilities is John Braddick's notice about the "Norwich-New London Passage Boat."²¹

The volume of advertising in the Courant definitely ran larger, although this may not be an accurate gauge at all of the relative volume of the local trade. The aggressiveness of the newspaper editor, the circulation figures, and area served would affect the advertising greatly.

¹⁶ Gazette, October 7, 14, 21, 1774.

¹⁷ October 23, 1774.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ October 7, 14, 21, 28, 1774.

²⁰ October 7, 14, 1774.

²¹ October 14, 1774.

An excellent idea of the nature of the offerings of the merchants the Ladies in this town, and others, who make all kinds of and of some of their problems can be obtained from a study of the in the most and most French fashions--she also makes all advertisements of the early 1770's. ²⁰

Trader **"T. HOPKINS,** who came to town in the 1770's. Individual (At his Store opposite the North Meeting-House in Hartford) Has a neat and general Assortment of Goods suitable for all Seasons, which he will sell on reasonable Terms for Cash. ²¹ He has Indigo of the very best Kind, together with choice Baked Tea, Coffee, and Chocolate." ²²

The use of street numbers was unknown at that time so that a store often was located by reference to some well-known landmark, as in this case.

Incidentally, Hopkins' insistence upon cash was unusual.

"SAMUEL TILEY North of the Court-House, Queen Street, Hartford ²⁵ Has just received a quantity of New-England RUM of the very best kind, which he will sell on the most reasonable terms, for cash, wheat, rye, pork, or indian corn." ²³

Rum was a most popular drink so that Tiley probably sold plenty of it, but largely for produce rather than cash. Some merchants believed in short advertisements: ²⁴

A clear advertisement was demonstrated occasionally as

BEST OLD TOBACCO

To be sold at Abraham Bradley's Store in He of Wethersfield designed Litchfield. August 24, 1773."

Then as now the latest dress fashions stirred the interests of the women.

²² C. C., July 21, 1772.

²³ January 12, 1773.

²⁴ October 7, 1773.

MARY GABRIEL, Mantua Maker and Milliner from Paris, informs the Ladies in this Town, and others, she makes all Kinds of Lady's Gowns, Caps, Bonnets &c, and dresses Lady's Heads, all in the neatest and newest French Fashions--She also washes all Kinds of fine Linens, Gowns, Laces &c...^{25A}

Trade experienced its slumps and booms in the 1770's. Individual merchants, furthermore, experienced their own specific difficulties apart from the prosperity of the times. Distress sales were far from unknown in these days, to follow Nature's Rule.

And now I pledge to Word, and say,
The noble Goddess will stay.

GOODS to be Sold at what they Cost,
BY JOHN KILLWORTH
of Middletem,

To the amount of about One Thousand Pounds, well sorted, and suitable for the season on account of poor pay, dull times, and multiplicity of traders. Not nearly as low as they can be purchased in New York but lower for cash or Country Produce.²⁶

Collection of bills was not always easy. The pace of life was more leisurely in these days; and so was that for paying bills apparently!

All persons indebted to Daniel Whitmore, Clothier, of Middletem, are desired to make immediate payment, or they must expect trouble.²⁷

The daily transactions of the local merchant seem to have been in a flourish. A flair for unusual advertising was demonstrated occasionally as in this long attempt at rhyming by William Beadle of Wetherfield designed to unload a hundred pounds or so of tea before the Continental Association took effect on March 1, 1775. Excerpts are given here.

²⁵ C. C., May 8, 1775.

²⁶ March 18, 1775. Account book, 1774-1776. With the exception of the first entry, the entries are not verbatim and spelling has been

²⁷ March 20, 1775.

[January 1, 1775] "Addressed to the Ladies

Fair Ladies, 'tis not very arch,
To talk about the first of March,
That woeful day, when each of ye,
Must leave your darling Hector, TEA!

[E] 1:2:0

[April 14, 1775] Austin Leeward Cr.

By 21 gallons rum @ 3 sh.

E 4:13:0

[April 17, 1775] Austin Leeward

Sweet Fair Ones; though I tell this Story,
Upon my Word, I am no Tory;
In Spight of all tyrannic Tsels,
I mean to follow Virtue's Rules.
And now I pledge my Word, and say,
The noble Congress I'll obey.

0:1:6

0:1:0

0:0:10

E 0:1:16

Nathaniel Alden, Gunster, April 21, 1775

No. 6 pils. Banorif wine 4/8

1:3:1

1 pils. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2.

0:13:7

Now, tho' I send to let you know,

0:15:0

I have a hundred Weight, or so

0:15:0

It is as good as e'er was tasted;

0:15:4

Then must all this be lost and wasted?

E 0:15:5

0:15:5

[August 22, 1775] Gunster Hart. Cr.

1 pils. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2.

0:0:7

If a Market I should miss on't

Pray help me out, and buy a Dish on't.

When March sets in, I vow at once,

A Joe shan't purchase half an Ounce.²⁸

0:2:3

24 pils. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2.

0:15:5

5 pils. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2. 1/2.

0:15:5

The daily transactions of the local merchant come to life best in

their account books. Typical of the town merchants of the revolutionary

era was William Ellery of Hartford from whose account book several entries

have been selected.²⁹

These entries are from the first such entries in the book of 1775.

²⁸ C. C., February 13, 20, 1775.

0:15:5

²⁹ William Ellery's Account Book, 1774-1785. With the exception of the first entry, the entries are not verbatim and spelling has been modernized. 1

815

@ 12 1/4 1157 lbs. 109:14:9 1/2

[January 2, 1775] to "Bernabas Beane: Dr." on individual items as listed

To 2 Sett China Coffee Cups

6:00. Sugar Glass and 2 saucers @ 11/4 then today as 1 [E] 1:2:0

approximately and stilling per pound in 1775, which is about twice its

[April 14, 1775] Austin Ledyard Cr.

cost today. By 31 gallons rum @ 3 sh. 1 is far 4:13:0

of 1775.

[April 17, 1775] Austin Ledyard

To 1 stone jag @ 1/8 acceptable. This 0:1:6

To 1 lb. tobacco @ 1/8 0:1:0

even to about 1/16 per To 1 pint clover seed with today's price 0:0:10

E 0:3:4

undoubtedly related, many fewer per lb. than the necessary eight

Ethaniel Mather, Windsor, April 21, 1775

To 5 gals. Tenerife wine 4/8 1:3:4

12 1/2 lbs. leaf sugar 1/1 0:13:7

1 gal. brandy 0:6:0

1 pt. decanter for 1 gal. wine now. Present consideration 0:2:0

2 doz. lines 0:1:4

E 2:6:5

Credit by Cash 14:8

[August 22, 1775] Consider Bart, Dr.

To 1 leaf sugar, 6 3/4 lb. @ 1/2 0:5:7

[March 12, 1776] Ebenezer Watson, Dr. 3 shillings with

2 qts. rum @ 1/4 0:2:8

14 lbs. sugar 0:8:8

5 qts. rum 1/2 0:6:8

17:15

Captain Jeremiah Wadsworth seems to have dropped in frequently to buy or sell at William Ellery's store, or to mail a letter, as Ellery was postmaster. One finds such entries as these in 1775:

Capt. Jeremiah Wadsworth, Dr.

To 2 empty dry hogheads @ 3/ 0:6:0

Capt. Jeremiah Wadsworth, Dr.

To 1 hhd. leaf sugar, No. 4 67 1/2 lbs. @ 1/2 about 35 cents;

1 " " " " 62 1/2

1 " " " " 81 1/2

@ 12 1/4 2107 lbs. 109:14:9 1/2

It is of interest to note the prices upon individual items as listed above. Sugar then was a much greater luxury than today as it cost approximately one shilling per pound in 1775, which is about twice its cost today,³⁰ though the present general price level is far above that of 1775.

Lines at 1sh. 4d. for two dozen were more reasonable. This would come to about \$.13 per dozen, hardly comparable with today's prices; but undoubtedly relatively many fewer people then had the necessary eight pence for the dozen.³¹

Apparently brandy, rum, and wine, if anything, were cheaper relatively in 1775 than today. Wine at 4sh. 8d. (\$.93 approximately) per gallon was well below the price for good wine now. Present connoisseurs of good brandy would greet with delight a price of six shillings (\$1.20) per gallon. Likewise, rum at 1sh. 4d. (\$.27) per quart would represent a good bargain in modern terms.

Selling on board ship was fairly common in the towns located upon important navigable bodies of water, such as Hartford. A shipmaster with a full cargo of salt, or limestone, or fish, or West Indian goods would offer bargain prices to lure large and small buyers aboard. Thus, the time and expense of unloading would be avoided.³² The elimination of the middleman's profits undoubtedly appealed and helped render possible the lower prices. For example, Thomas Nye advertised in the Courant for October 21 and 28, 1776:

³⁰Sugar in March, 1948 was about \$.10 per pound.

³¹The August 25, 1947 valuation of the pound sterling in dollars of \$4.0275 has been used. A shilling therefore equals about 20 cents; and one pence, 1.67 cents.

³²Martin, pp. 13-14; William D. Love, Colonial History of Hartford (Hartford, 1935), pp. 302-303.

TO BE SOLD
On board the Sloop DORY, THOMAS NYE,
Master, lying the North Side the Ferry, Hartford,
One ton and an Half of ~~Colonial~~
LIVER OYL.

The colonial trade of Connecticut with the other mainland English colonies followed a general pattern of the northern. Even though the grand total of merchants in Connecticut was very small, the number was increasing rapidly throughout the Colony in the two decades, or so, just before the Revolution. Commerce depended basically upon the production of surplus agricultural goods, in which a healthy increase concomitant with the population upsurge was occurring. This surplus produce was traded locally, with other mainland colonies, the West Indies, and Europe.

Little true specialization of functions was yet apparent among the merchants. The division into wholesale and retail merchants had not occurred. A few merchants did specialize in selling one type of merchandise--as jewelry, or groceries. But, most of them, as reflected in the advertisements, offered a wide variety of goods. What little specialization there was existed chiefly in the largest towns. The small village store-keeper offered a real conglomeration of goods. In addition, there was much coast-to-coast trade between Connecticut ports.

The most important intercolonial trade was that with Massachusetts. In an economic sense, Boston, in colonial times, was the "hub of New England," if not of the Universe, for from a commercial viewpoint it dominated the section. A flood of small boats sailed back and forth between the seaports of Connecticut and Boston, which were focal points in the distribution of European goods to Connecticut merchants. These

Hartford, for example, did a **CHAPTER IX** business of this sort.² This dependence upon Boston (and New York) very much annoyed Connecticut merchants.³ Trade With the American Mainland Colonies

The colonial trade of Connecticut with the other mainland English colonies followed a general pattern characteristic of the northern colonies and constituted a very important portion of the total external trade of the Colony. The chief intercolonial trade may be classified broadly as the coastal trade. A small part of the mainland intercolonial trade did take part directly by land across the eastern, western, and northern boundaries of the Colony, but due to poor overland transportation facilities, the great bulk of Connecticut's intercolonial trade moved by water. Wing of the trade, clothing, appears to have been the chief import.

Some idea of the relative amount of coastal trade may be derived from a letter of John Miller of the New London customs house to Silas Deane in which he estimates the number of vessels entering and clearing from New London as follows: "To foreigners, 400 men, 3100 Tons, 22 Coasters, 90 men."¹ This would be only a partial picture, as New Haven, also, ranked as a port of entry. In addition, there was much coastal trade between Connecticut ports.

¹ J. Miller to Silas Deane (undated), in *Deane Papers*, p. 132.

The most important intercolonial trade was that with Massachusetts.

In an economic sense, Boston, in colonial times, was the "hub of New England," if not of the Universe, for from a commercial viewpoint it dominated the section. A fleet of small coasters sailed back and forth between the seaports of Connecticut and Boston, which was a focal point in the distribution of European goods to Connecticut merchants. Thomas

² Silas Deane Correspondence, C.H.S.C., II, 159-160. Information again.

Hancock, for example, did a thriving business of this sort.² This dependence upon Boston (and New York) very much annoyed Connecticut merchants,³ but they could not easily break away from it. Connecticut had little to offer directly to England, and it took much time to develop the various complicated triangular trading routes.⁴ Haven, in 1774 reported that "The pattern of the coastal trade with Massachusetts was fairly nearly uniform. Small coasters loaded up in Connecticut ports with such items, as horses, corn, wheat, rye, barley, peas, pork, beef, flax, hemp, cider, tar pitch, beards, and pipestaves.⁵ In return, they brought back all kinds of European goods including clothing, powder, shot, glass, East Indian goods such as pepper, dyes and silks, tea, and wines.⁶ In the early stages of the trade, clothing appears to have been the chief import. Governor Leete declared in regard to Connecticut's surplus produce: "The most is transported to Boston, and there bartered for clothing."⁷ The 1761 report to the Board of Trade stated that "beef, pork, wheat, rye, indian corn, flax, flax-seed and oats" were exported principally to Boston and New York, "thence receiving (of and thro' the hands of merchants there) British manufactures in exchange."⁸

²W. T. Baxter, The House of Hancock (Cambridge, 1945), p. 189.

³Martin, p. 30.

⁴See Chap. I for details about these routes.

⁵C. R. III, 297, in "Answers to Queries" by Governor Leete (1680).

⁶Baxter, p. 189; Martin, p. 24.

⁷C. R. III, 297.

⁸C. R. XI, 629. The 1774 report gives very little information upon intercolonial trade.

Merchants from a large number of towns in Connecticut traded with Boston. New London and New Haven, the two chief ports, naturally predominated in this activity. Nathaniel Shaw, Jr., of New London had considerable business with Boston merchants.⁹

Colonel David Wooster, customs officer of New Haven, in 1774 reported that "European and India goods, taken from Boston and New York, annually amount to about 40,000 £ sterling; for which remittances are made in pork, beef, wheat, rye, Indian corn, flax-seed, pot and pearl ashes."¹⁰ No indication is given as to what proportion went to each town, but New Haven's location would tend to direct more trade to New York; and New London's, more to Boston.

Even as far east as Stratford (modern Bridgeport), however, the coasters' traded partly with Boston, even though New York was much nearer at hand.¹¹ In Norwalk, farther east still, after 1770 Esaias Benton owned a ship which coasted back and forth to Boston.¹²

Several towns had specific local products for which there was a market in Boston. Middletown, for example, sent much stone from its quarries to Boston for building, tombstones, etc.¹³ Up in East Windsor Captain Ebenezer Grant and his son, Roswell Grant, were important

⁹ Ernest E. Rogers, Connecticut's Naval Office at New London (New London, 1933), p. 8.

¹⁰ "Statistics of New Haven," N.H.S.C., XII, 213.

¹¹ Samuel Orutt, History of the Old Town of Stratford and the City of Bridgeport (New Haven, 1893), p. 47.

¹² Samuel R. Wood, Norwalk after Two Hundred and Fifty Years (South Norwalk, Connecticut, 1901), p. 248.

¹³ Extracts of Letters to Rev. Thomas Prince, C.H.S.C., III, 279.

customers of John Hancock of Boston from whom they secured stocks of dry goods.¹⁴

Boston in 1769 imported 1000 tons of beef and pork, mostly from Connecticut. The city also depended upon Connecticut (Wethersfield)¹⁵

for its onions of which it took 60,000 ropes in that year. Some of Boston

Boston's food also came from western Massachusetts by way of the

Connecticut River.¹⁵

The number of coastwise entries and clearances recorded at Boston

in 1773 from and for colonies outside of Massachusetts Bay show

impressively the significant place of Connecticut in the total picture:¹⁶

		<u>Entries</u>	<u>Clearances</u>	
May 12, 1774	Connecticut	74	69	William Gregory
	North Carolina	61	55	
May 20, 1774	Maryland	48	40	Marble and
	Newfoundland and St. John	33	45	Burrows
	Virginia	19	28	Davis, Stor,
	Philadelphia	19	25	Ward, Gordon
	Halifax	17	8	
May 27, 1774	Rhode Island	13	8	Seaboard
	New York	11	7	Frederick,
	Quebec	7	10	John Clark
	South Carolina	3	7	
May 27, 1774	Georgia	4	3	Steele, Hamilton
		303	303	Thomas Davis

From the newspaper records of ships entering and clearing from New

York and New London¹⁷ one can obtain a good impression of the intercolonial

¹⁴ Henry R. Stiles, History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut (New York, 1889), p. 483.

¹⁵ Samuel E. Morison, "The Commerce of Boston on the Eve of the Revolution," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, LII, 43-44.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 43. The table is probably incomplete.

¹⁷ The New London Customs House and its records were burned by Arnold's troops in September, 1781.

trade of these two busy towns.

New Haven Customs House¹⁸

Date	Ship Entered	From	Ship Cleared and Master	For
May 6, 1774	Schooner <u>Defiance</u> , Daniel Olds	Boston	Sloop <u>Dolphin</u> , Joseph Hull	Boston
May 6, 1774	Sloop <u>Dolphin</u> , Joseph Hull	New York		
May 13, 1774	Sloop <u>Sally</u> , David Hawley	Boston	Sloop <u>Sally</u> , Hawley	Boston
May 13, 1774			Sloop <u>Dolphin</u> , Stephen Trowbridge	New York
May 13, 1774	Sloop <u>Lydia</u> , Misch Deane	Rhode Island	Sloop <u>Lilly</u> , Abraham Bradley	New York
May 13, 1774	Sloop <u>Lark</u> , John Ward	New York	Sloop <u>Sally</u> , William Gregory	New York
May 20, 1774	[?] Morris and Summers	Boston	Morris and Summers	Boston
	[?] Davis, Stow, Brooks	New York	Davis, Stow, Ward, Gordon	New York
May 27, 1774	Sloop <u>Botany</u> , S. Clark	Boston	Schooner <u>Prudent</u> , John Clark	New York
May 27, 1774	Sloop <u>Dolphin</u> , S. Trowbridge	New York	Sloop <u>Benjamin</u> , Thomas Davis	New York
May 27, 1774	Sloop <u>Lilly</u> , A. Bradley	New York		
May 27, 1774	Schooner <u>Lark</u> , John Ward	New York		

For New London the entries and clearances also provide an excellent view of the port's trade. In this case, ships to and from foreign parts and British West Indian ports are included to give a suggestion as to the proportion involved in intercolonial and foreign trade respectively.

¹⁸ Journal, May 1774 issues. Only ships to or from mainland ports are included here.

New London Customs House

Exports (Contd.)

Entries

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ship Entered</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>From</u>
May 18, 1774 ¹⁹	Schooner <u>Fox</u>	Mitchell	Grenadoes
	Schooner <u>Folly</u>	Brown	St. Croix
	Sloop <u>Endavour</u>	Richards	Gadeloupe
	Sloop <u>Folly</u>	Harrier	Boston
May 26, 1774 ²⁰	Sloop <u>American</u>	Church	Barbadoes
	Sloop <u>New London Packet</u>	Ingraham	Newport
Aug. 31, 1774 ²¹	Sloop <u>Greyhound</u>	Palmer	New York
	Schooner <u>Endavour</u>	Harris	Philadelphia
	Sloop <u>New London Packet</u>	Tinker, Jr.	New York
	Sloop <u>Massachusetts</u>	Keene	New York
Sept. 7, 1774 ²²	Brigantine <u>Two Brothers</u>	Reed	St. Eustatia
	Sloop <u>Delight</u>	Stillman	Dominica
Oct. 7, 1774 ²³	Sloop <u>Lizard</u>	Daniel Starr	New York
	Sloop <u>Folly</u>	Jeremiah Harris	Gaspee
	Sloop <u>Endavour</u>	Israel Williams	Salon
	Sloop <u>Folly</u>	Joshua Hampstead	Cape Francois
	Brig <u>True Blue</u>	Michael McKally	Palmcuth
Oct. 14, 1774 ²⁴	Sloop <u>Betsy</u>	Theo. Stanton	Plymouth
	Sloop <u>New London Packet</u>	Edward Tinker, Jr.	New York
	Schooner <u>Endavour</u>	Thomas Fanning	New York
	Schooner <u>Hanger</u>	Josiah Duck	Soltartuda

¹⁹Packet, May 19, 1774. The original spelling has been retained in this table.

²⁰May 26, 1774.

²¹September 1, 1774.

²²September 8, 1774.

²³Gasette, October 7, 1774.

²⁴October 14, 1774.

New London Customs HouseEntries (Cont.)

Date	Ship Cleared	Master	For
Nov. 3, 1774 ²⁵ May 10, 1774	Sloop <u>Macaroni</u>	Chappel	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Harris	Philadelphia
	Sloop <u>Betty</u>	Chappel	Philadelphia
Dec. 21, 1774 ²⁶ May 10, 1774	Brig <u>Henry</u>	Champlin	Guadeloupe
	Sloop <u>Royalist</u>	Davison	New York
Mar. 29, 1775 ²⁷	Schooner <u>Fannah</u>	Gray	Dominica
	Sloop <u>Del</u>	Prisbry	Newport
	Schooner <u>Whallow</u>	Darrow	Newport
Aug. 31, 1774 ²⁸	Brigantine <u>Round</u>	James	Salina
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Earle	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Earle	Whale Island
Sept. 7, 1774 ²⁹	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Miller	Salina
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Miller	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Miller	Salina
Oct. 7, 1774 ³⁰	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Thomas Harding	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Thomas Harding	New York
Oct. 14, 1774 ³¹	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Salina	Salina
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Salina	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Salina	Salina
Nov. 3, 1774 ³²	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Salina	New York
	Sloop <u>Paty</u>	Salina	New York

²⁵ Packet, May 10, 1774. The original spelling has been retained in this table.

²⁶ May 10, 1774.

²⁷ May 10, 1774.

²⁸ Gazette, November 24, 1774.

²⁹ Packet, December 21, 1774.

³⁰ March 30, 1775.

New London Customs House.(Clearances etc.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ship Cleared</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>For</u>
May 18, 1774 ²⁸	Sloop <u>Banner</u>	Sage	Jamaica
	Sloop <u>Polly</u>	Lord	Antigua
May 20, 1774 ²⁹	Sloop <u>Williams</u>	Benton	Barbadoes
	Sloop <u>Clarissa</u>	Miller	Boston
May 25, 1774 ²⁹	Sloop <u>Lyon</u>	Ethridge	Jamaica
	Brig <u>Polly</u>	Lee	Jamaica
	Schooner <u>Olive</u>	Tinker	Antigua
	Sloop <u>John</u>	Bigelow	Barbadoes
	Sloop <u>Betsy</u>	Williams	Boston
Aug. 31, 1774 ³⁰	Brigantine <u>Hannah</u>	Ayres	Salem
	Sloop <u>Diogenes</u>	Parks	New York
	Sloop <u>Polly</u>	Aborn	Rhode Island
Sept. 7, 1774 ³¹	Sloop <u>Clarissa</u>	Miller	Salem
	Sloop <u>Robert</u>	Robinson	New York
	Schooner <u>Polly</u>	Eard	Salem
Oct. 7, 1774 ³²	Schooner <u>Chelsea</u>	Thomas Fanning	New York
	Sloop <u>Betsy and Polly</u>	Ezekiah Perkins	Tobago
Oct. 14, 1774 ³³	Sloop <u>Miller</u>	Ephraim Farnara	Tobago
	Sloop <u>Joshua Packet</u>	Joshua Ingraham	Newport
	Sloop <u>Polly</u>	Jabez Lord	Hispaniola
Nov. 3, 1774 ³⁴	Sloop <u>Incoria</u>	Tinker	North Carolina
	Schooner <u>Chelsea</u>	Huntington	New York

²⁸ Packet, May 19, 1774. The original spelling has been retained in this table.

²⁹ May 26, 1774.

³⁰ September 1, 1774.

³¹ September 8, 1774.

³² Gazette, October 7, 1774.

³³ October 14, 1774.

³⁴ November 24, 1774.

Of the fifty-six ship New London Customs House; twenty-five, or
forty-five per cent of the Clearances (Cont.) to or from ports in

Rhode Island, or New York.

Dec. 21, 1774³⁵

Brig Britannia

Tracy

Grenades

Dec. 21, 1774³⁵

Schooner Swallow

Fitch

North Carolina

Mar. 29, 1775³⁶

Brig Royall

Shepard

Martinico

Sloop Hetty

Burr

New York

Sloop Folly

Bigelow

South Carolina

On the night of Dec. 21, the 35 last, a ship
belonging to Christopher W. Wigglesworth, Esq. of
this town, was on her way from Boston to
New London, drove upon the Shoal, and of
Hartford Shoal, two miles distant from the
main point of the harbor. The vessel was lost,
the ship broken, scattered to the winds, and
the crew and cargo saved.

The ship's escape from a large amount of trade would have been
noticed by the public, the ship's owner, and the
lower class of the town. Yet the public mind was still so much
preoccupied with the war, that they did not see the loss of the
ship as a great disaster. They believed, however, that the
loss of the ship was a great disaster, and that the
public mind was still so much preoccupied with the war, that they
did not see the loss of the ship as a great disaster.

It is already known that a moderate trade
existed between Rhode Island and Connecticut. A large trade was conducted
between the two colonies, and the colonies were of the
same type. When any considerable trade was opened, upon each getting
a trade from the other, before trying to sell to the other.

The trade followed two main routes: (1) coastwise from Connecticut
down the coast, usually through the (2) inland from eastern Connecticut

³⁵Packet, December 21, 1774.

³⁶March 30, 1775.

Of the fifty-six ships listed in this sampling twenty-five, or about forty-five per cent of the total, were sailing to or from ports in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, or New York. As early as 1774 One does not usually associate danger with the coastal trade, but accidents of a serious nature did occur occasionally as this notice in early the Norwich Packet of April 14, 1774 indicates.

On the night of Sunday the 3d Inst. a Sloop belonging to Christopher Leffingwell, Esq. of this Town, was, on her Passage from Boston to New London, drove upon the Snowdrift, one of the Kentucket Shoals, two miles distant from the Sandy Point of Monomack. The vessel was lost, but the People, greatest Part of the Cargo, and the Sails &c. were saved.

One might assume that a large amount of trade would have flowed between Springfield, the chief upper Connecticut River town, and the lower river towns. Yet the volume actually was small because Springfield merchants sent to Boston or New York for most of their European goods. They relied, however, chiefly upon Hartford and Middletown for West Indian goods.

Evidence has already been adduced to show that a moderate trade existed between Rhode Island and Connecticut. A large trade was rendered difficult because the surplus products of the two colonies were of the same type. Hence any sizeable trade depended upon each getting products to trade from other places before trying to sell to the other.

The trade followed two main routes: (1) coastal from Connecticut ports to Rhode Island, usually Newport; (2) inland from eastern Connecticut towns such as Windham, Plainfield, and Pomfret to Providence and other

Rhode Island towns. As in the case of trade with Massachusetts, that by water involved a greater volume of trade with Rhode Island. The paper
Newport seems to have been a leading colonial wool mart. As early
as 1643 John Winthrop imported sheep from Newport; and, throughout the
colonial and revolutionary periods, Connecticut Valley settlers customarily
purchased wool from Newport.³⁸ The fact that this trade was very limited. When
Barnaby visited New England in 1789-90, he observed that Rhode
Island produced very little of value for export, or for trade with
neighbors. He noted, however, that through exchangeable goods of
various kinds they levied a high toll upon Connecticut.³⁹
A goodly amount of produce flowed from eastern Connecticut towns
into Providence. James and Moses Brown, leading merchants of the town
and Colony, depended in part upon Connecticut traders for lumber,
provisions, and cattle. The cattle were driven over usually from the
towns of Plainfield, Killingly, and Pomfret.⁴⁰ Connecticut agents also
pushed up into western Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire for any
products marketable in Providence. Connecticut merchants, in return,
procured rum, sugar, and molasses from Providence.⁴¹ Daniel Larned of
Thompson was one of those who sent carts and agents northward to obtain
pork, beef, and ashes for the Providence market.⁴²

³⁸ Clark, p. 73.

³⁹ Andrew Barnaby, Travels in North America in John Pinkerton's
Collection of Voyages and Travels (London, 1812), XIII, 741.

⁴⁰ Gertrude S. Kimball, Providence in Colonial Times (Boston, 1912),
p. 275.

⁴¹ Larned, II, 88.

⁴² Island, especially its proximity, and also historical
Doyle, p. 643. Little trade with Connecticut.

To a considerable extent, in the later colonial period, the problem of paper money hampered trade relations with Rhode Island. The paper money issues of the Colony definitely injured its trade as Connecticut merchants tended to "shy away" from them.⁴³

Some reference has already been made to trade with New Hampshire and Vermont. It is very probable that this trade was very limited. Both areas were thinly settled, especially Vermont, while New Hampshire was not conveniently located. Connecticut merchants tended not to bother with the small market of northern New England except in prosperous times when they had an unusually good market available for products from that section, or in dull times when they sought to unload goods unsaleable in normal markets. In the latter class was a certain Captain Easton, a ship-master and slave-dealer, who, finding poor markets, drove negroes to New Hampshire and Vermont and returned with horses and poles.⁴⁴

Trade with New York very much resembled that with Massachusetts and Rhode Island, except that one port, New York City, took nearly all the trade.⁴⁵ New York City at that time was less important than Boston in commercial volume, but its convenient nearness to most Connecticut sea and river ports increased its attractiveness to Connecticut merchants. Boston was still first in distribution of goods by small boats to Connecticut coastal towns, but New York was beginning to crowd her by

⁴³ Needon, p. 755.

⁴⁴ William Fowler, Historical Status of the Negro in Connecticut (Charleston, 1901), p. 17.

⁴⁵ Long Island, despite its propinquity and close historical association, had very little trade with Connecticut.

the 1750's.⁶⁶ Shaw had extensive dealings with Vandervoort, especially

The pattern of the trade with New York has already been described—

essentially one of meats, grain, and vegetables to New York in return

for British manufactures handled by New York middlemen. It continued in

One of the New York merchants who dealt on a large scale with

Connecticut traders was Peter Vandervoort. Thomas Seymour and Jeremiah

Wadsworth of Hartford, Nathaniel Shaw and Thomas Allen of New London

were among those who had important accounts with Vandervoort. For

example, in August, 1774 Vandervoort put up some of Allen's rum for

sale, but found the market glutted and had to close it out at a low

price. Throughout that fall, Vandervoort continued to act as a commission

merchant for Allen.⁶⁷

Vandervoort shipped many goods to Connecticut. Typical of this

was a small consignment sent in September, 1770 on Capt. Alost's ship

to Hartford for Thomas Seymour's account.

3 Boxes 7 by 9 Glass at 93/ £ 14:5:0

1 Cap & Box Seat pr Post 0:6:9

120 lb. Nails 8:0:0

Keg for d[itto] 0:1:6

Carting Glass to my house 0:1:0

Carting d[itto] & Nails on Board 6:1:0

£22:15:5

⁶⁶Robert East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era (New York, 1933), p. 16. A. M. Schlesinger, The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776 (New York, 1918) asserts that after the Parliamentary Act of 1761 prohibiting emission of legal-tender money in New England the Connecticut merchants diverted trade to New York, p. 26.

⁶⁷Thomas Allen Correspondence, 1774-1777. Letters dated August 27, September 6, 8, 14, 22, November 19, December 3, 1774.

⁶⁸Beardman Coll. I, Doc. 3938.

Nathaniel Shaw had extensive dealings with Vandervoort, apparently with a wide variety of transactions. Shaw's ships often stopped at New York en route to or from the West Indies, and also made direct round trips on the New London-New York route. A typical deal is outlined in this letter of Shaw to Vandervoort of January 15, 1775.

Correspondence between Shaw and Vandervoort concerning this deal is very small.

"I Rec^d yrs by Macerone wth y^e Cash. This is just to let you know that I intend as soon as Chappell Returns that he will go on Board y^e Macerone for West India & will call on you for one hundred bar super fine flower & two hundred half Johnnises which should be glad you would have Ready for him. Hope you have been able to get the 100 bar of pork at y^e price I wrote for from Hartford last week."⁴⁹

Shaw's first letter to Vandervoort was dated for the years 1772, 1773 and

New York merchants advertised occasionally in the Connecticut papers,⁵⁰ and it is likely that their efforts bore fruit. Among those who advertised in the Courant were John Morton who had good pig iron at twenty dollars a ton;⁵¹ William Hawthurst who sold anchors;⁵² and J. Simnet who retailed watches.⁵³ Joshua Chandler (Yale '47) estimated that New Haven merchants were indebted to New York to the tune of £20,000.⁵⁴

Payment of such debts in an age when specie was very scarce often proved very difficult. Gerard Beekman, merchant of New York, found

⁴⁹ Rogers, p. 265.

⁵⁰ See pp. 133-139.

⁵¹ Courant, August 3, 1772.

⁵² July 20, 27, August 3, 10, 1773, etc.

⁵³ January 26, February 2, 9, 16, 23, 1773, etc.

⁵⁴ Stiles, Itineraries, p. 83.

payment by his debtors disgracefully slow and spoke his mind vigorously upon the subject in a letter to Samuel Johnson: "I think 7/8 of the people I have credited in New England has proved to be d--d ungrateful cheating that I am now almost afraid to Trust any Connecticut man tho' he's well recommended from others."⁵⁵

Connecticut's trade with other mainland colonies was very small. Connecticut ships did stop occasionally at every colony on the coast, but not to an extent which compared with the trade already described. A very good comparison of the trade of Connecticut with four colonies may be obtained from the following table for the years 1768, 1770 and 1772.

Tonnage of Ships⁵⁶

	<u>Entering from Connecticut</u>			<u>Clearing for Connecticut</u>		
	<u>1768</u>	<u>1770</u>	<u>1772</u>	<u>1768</u>	<u>1770</u>	<u>1772</u>
Boston	509	3240	2922	618	3181	2833
New York	313	4230	2727	70	4471	2222
Philadelphia	120	90	79	240	90	259
Charleston	--	40	23	--	50	20

There was no solid basis for a large trade between Connecticut and Pennsylvania and other colonies southward. In most cases a Connecticut ship would stop at Philadelphia or a southern port on the return trip from the West Indies,⁵⁷ or at any rate with West Indian goods. An example of this trade is represented in this letter of Nathaniel Shaw to

⁵⁵ Virginia D. Harrington, New York Merchants on the Eve of the Revolution, p. 122. From Beekman Letter-book, December 2, 1754.

⁵⁶ Harrington, Appendix G, adapted.

⁵⁷ Martin, p. 14.

Messrs. Thomas and Isaac Wharton of Philadelphia, dated October 15,
1774:⁵⁸ at rare intervals, from New York.

"Gentlemen, I Received yours of the 1st & 8th Inst
and am Glad to hear that West India Goods are on the Rise. I
now Send you by Capt Chappell a Cargoe of very Good
Melasses and I hope you will be Able to git a Good Price
for it. Send me One hundred and Fifty barrels of Super
Fine Flower, and if you Can Collect any Dollars, I should
be Glad you would Send me near About the Ballance. If
Melasses Continues high I will Send Chappell back with
another Cargoe...."

Iron, steel, glass, and flour were characteristic items carried from
Philadelphia to Connecticut ports.⁵⁹ Thus it was in one of, or in a
combination of, three forms by which Pennsylvania rendered payment:
European goods (such as glass), Pennsylvania goods (such as flour), or
cash.

An example of the interstate trade is afforded by Stephen Austin,
a Hartford merchant, who advertised repeatedly in 1772 a sale of buckskin
breeches and gloves just received from Philadelphia.⁶⁰

As already suggested, trade with the southern colonies amounted to
very little. An occasional coaster stopped in at Chesapeake Bay ports,
the Cape Fear region, Charleston, or Savannah.⁶¹ For example, the sloop
Grampus, thirty tons from New Haven, entered the Port of Roanoke on
March 21, 1774 carrying a cargo of 150 pounds salt, 2000 pounds flax,

⁵⁸ Rogers, p. 258.

⁵⁹ Martin, p. 14.

⁶⁰ C. C., October 27, 1772, c.g.

⁶¹ Martin, p. 14.

1000 pounds of cheese, spinning wheels, and chairs.⁶² Nathaniel Shaw's ships, at rare intervals, touched at New Bern.⁶³ In 1774 Titus Hosmer of Wethersfield reported to Silas Deane that "the Brig is gone for Carolina--for myself I got insured £200 on Vessel & Cargo, to & from, at 4 per cent."⁶⁴ The chances are that this ship transported down some grain, cider, apples, cheese and the like and brought back tobacco, rice, naval stores, cotton, and indigo.⁶⁵

Connecticut was hard pressed to pay for such imports from the South, for the South needed very little of the goods which she offered. In part, however, Connecticut liquidated her southern and middle colony debts by providing the services of her coastal vessels.⁶⁶

Upon rare occasions a Connecticut ship sailed for a Canadian port, as this advertisement indicates.

"FOR NOVA SCOTIA

The Sloop Sally, Thomas Hatchford,
Master, will sail with all convenient Speed,
For Freight or Passage apply to said Master,
at Norwich Landing.
Norwich April 7, 1774.⁶⁷

At long intervals a Connecticut vessel put in at Newfoundland, also; and once in a while an enterprising trader took the overland route to Canada.

⁶² James Iredill, Sr., Port of Roanoke, 1771-1776.

⁶³ Rogers, p. 6.

⁶⁴ "Correspondence of Silas Deane," C.H.S.C., II, 155.

⁶⁵ Martin, p. 25; Bidwell, p. 143.

⁶⁶ Bidwell, p. 143.

⁶⁷ Packet, April 21, 28, 1774.

Benedict Arnold, for example, is said to have gone up the Hudson and into Canada with woollen goods.⁶⁸

The overall picture for the trade with the mainland colonies may be summarized in these terms. Connecticut enjoyed two principal and two minor fields of trade. The former involved the fairly heavy traffic with Massachusetts and Rhode Island on one side, and with New York on the other. The areas of minor trading contact comprised the more distant colonies in both directions; namely, Canada and the southern colonies.

It is impossible to find exact data on the total value of imports and exports. In general, however, it appears likely that Connecticut experienced a somewhat unfavorable balance of trade in her dealings with the other mainland colonies. This certainly was the case when she sent out her raw materials and received manufactured goods (of European origin usually) from her neighbors.

significant facts stand out in **CHAPTER X** reports. First of all, the principal

of the West Indian trade. (The bills of exchange were employed to pay

The West Indian Trade

to purchase goods from England. Likewise, the profits from the sale of

From very early times Connecticut traders discovered that the most profitable type of overseas trade available was that with the West

Indies, either as a direct trade, or as one leg of a triangular route.

The West Indian trade enlisted the efforts of nearly every important

Connecticut merchant who engaged in commerce outside the Colony.

Again one may turn to the answers of the Governor and Company to the Board of Trade as a point of departure for the study of the West

Indian trade. The replies of 1762 and 1774 are the most pertinent to

this inquiry; and that of 1762 is the more complete.

The trade of the Colony consists chiefly in beef, pork, flour, bread, horses, some cattle, sheep, swine and lumber, exported to the British islands in the West Indies, and in exchange for them are received rum, sugar, molasses, salt and some bills of exchange which are generally remitted to England; and in beef, pork, wheat, rye, indian corn, flax, flax-seed and oats, exported to the neighbouring governments, principally to Boston and New York, thence receiving (of and thro' the hands of merchants there) ¹ British manufactures in exchange, which are consumed among us.

In 1774 it was stated that the "principal Trade of this Colony is to the West-India Islands—excepting now and then a Vessel to Ireland with Flaxseed, and to England with Lumber and Potashes, and a few to Gibraltar and Barbary."²

It is obvious therefore that the West Indian trade played a leading role in the entire overseas trade picture of the Colony. Several other

¹C. R. XI, 629.

²C. R. XIV, 498.

³In India, however.

significant facts stand out in these reports. First of all, the profits of the West Indian trade (the bills of exchange) were employed in part to purchase goods from England. Likewise, the profits from the sale of

Connecticut surpluses to the neighboring colonies, chiefly Massachusetts and New York; were also used in part to pay for English goods—a second complex trading pattern. It is important to note that the great bulk of Connecticut's foreign trade consisted of direct trading with the West

Indies. Triangular routes which were very popular with Rhode Island and other merchants were rarely undertaken by Connecticut shippers.³

The following tables give a reliable picture of the relative volume of Connecticut's trade with (1) the mainland colonies, (2) the West Indies, (3) Southern Europe and Africa, and (4) Great Britain and Ireland. To give a comparison, totals for the other three New England colonies, and three other colonies of approximately equal population, New York, Maryland, and North Carolina, are given.

Gross Registered Tonnage Entered and Cleared in 1769⁴

I. Entered from

Colony	American Continent ⁵	British and foreign West Indies	Southern Europe and Africa	Great Britain and Ireland	Total Tonnage
Connecticut	9971	7790	105	150	18016
New Hampshire	5551	9500	480	915	16446
Massachusetts	27618	17898	6595	14340	66451
Rhode Island	10237	5953	226	418	16834
New York	11714	6964	2730	5224	26632
Maryland	6574	4533	4095	16468	30670
North Carolina	9259	6702	700	6415	23076

³Martin, p. 23.

⁴Johnson, p. 92.

⁵Includes Bahamas.

David Hovey, Jr., 1780-1850. II. Cleared to

	American Continent	British and foreign West Indies	Southern Europe and Africa	Great Britain and Ireland	Total Tonnage
Connecticut	7988	9201	200	580	17,968
New Hampshire	3874	12878	170	2822	19,744
Massachusetts	26988	17532	5102	14044	63,666
Rhode Island	10312	6060	863	540	17,775
New York	11440	5468	3433	6470	26,859
Maryland	5298	3358	6224	16116	30,996
North Carolina	7333	6945	1030	7806	23,113

The cargoes carried would run about fifty per cent greater than the

vessel tonnages given above.⁶ Hence, Connecticut's imports in 1769

totalled approximately 27,024 tons; her exports, 28,950 tons.

It is of interest to note the percentage breakdown of Connecticut's imports and exports.

Tonnage Comparison Table

Area	Entered from	Cleared for
American Continent	55.3 %	44.4 %
West Indies	43.2 %	51.2 %
Southern Europe	.3 %	1.1 %
Great Britain and Ireland	.8 %	3.2 %

In other words, exclusive of intra-colonial trade, about one-half of Connecticut's trade went to and from the West Indies, and nearly all the remainder was coastal. Trade with Europe and Africa was virtually negligible.

Practically every sea and river port in the colony engaged actively in the West Indian trade. New London and New Haven ranked at the top in volume among the Sound towns, while Norwich and Middletown stood highest among the river towns.

⁶ Johnson, p. 91.

David Wooster, customs officer at New Haven, provided the Governor with a brief report on the port and its trade.⁷

The trade from this port of the Colony is entirely to the West India islands, and the exports are horses, oxen, pork, beef, tallow, and lumber, and the imports West India produce....⁸

Wooster, in answer to another question, declared that they traded with no "foreign plantation" except the French West Indies in which trade virtually the same products were exchanged, and to the amount of about £3000 annually.⁹

Another source presents an impressive list of products traded with the West Indies by New Haven merchants. Among the exports were hogs, sheep, cows, horses, "fowles of all kind," tallow, beeswax, myrtle wax, and lumber. In return, New Haven imported rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, cocoa, piments, gold, and silver.¹⁰ A good one thousand horses and nearly as many oxen were shipped yearly from the port.¹¹ However, storms and other hazards took a large toll of ships, as in 1761 when no less than thirteen ships belonging to New Haven were lost.¹²

Norwalk, like the other eastern Sound ports, sent some ships to

This report together with that of Jeremiah Miller, customs collector at New London, formed the basis for the Governor's answers to the Board of Trade in October, 1774.

⁸"Statistics of New Haven," XII, 217.

⁹Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁰Mary G. Powell, "A Scotchman's Journey in New England in 1771," New England Magazine, XII (May, 1895), 362.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Stiles, Itineraries, p. 43.

the West Indies. About 1770, for example, the ship Polly made regular trips under Captain Squire, generally to and from Barbados. On one voyage in 1775 the Polly brought back in its cargo, almost 2000 gallons of molasses and close to 4000 pounds of sugar. Antigua, also, seems to have gotten supplies from Norwalk in some quantity.¹³

New London's commerce with the West Indies stayed at a high level throughout the half-century preceding the Revolution except for the years of the French and Indian War. Jeremiah Miller, customs officer at New London, indicated that the town's principal trade was with the West Indies, chiefly with the British islands, but also with the French and Dutch islands.¹⁴ New London served as the distribution point for a large area, both up the river and over the countryside. It was not unusual for a hundred farmers' wagons to come into New London on a summer day with produce to be sold for shipment on boats to the West Indies.¹⁵

Nathaniel Shaw undoubtedly carried on more West Indian trade than any of his New London neighbors. His ships traded at many islands and ports including Hispaniola, Dominica, Monte Cristi, Cape Haitien, Le Moule, St. Christopher, St. Pierre, Turks Island, St. Croix, Port au Prince, Cape Francois, St. Eustatia, St. Johns, Pointe d' Petrie, and Antigua.¹⁶

In 1771 New London sent to the West Indies 1450 live cattle, 4180 hogs

¹³ A. F. Beard, "Historical Address," Norwalk After 250 Years, p. 245.

¹⁴ "Statistics of New London," XII, 219-220.

¹⁵ Charles B. Todd, "An Old New England Seaport," Lippincott's Magazine, XXVII, 30.

¹⁶ Rogers, pp. 6-7., 14, 1771.

²¹ Powell, p. 349.

West Indian trade. As already mentioned, it was customary for up-river and nearby communities to depend upon Middletown and Hartford for their West Indian goods. A large group of Middletown merchants engaged in the trade including Richard Alsop, Elijah and Nehemiah Hubbard, Colonel Lemuel Storrs, George and Thompson Phillips, and General Comfort Sage. Alsop had the greatest success.²² Jonathan Trumbull and his associates, Jonathan Williams and Pitkin, often sent ships from Middletown, East Haddam, or Wethersfield. They also traded through Norwich.²³ Their vessel, the Dove, frequently sailed from Middletown for the West Indies.²⁴

In Hartford a considerable group of merchants concerned themselves with the West Indies trade. Some well-known names involved in this trade prior to the Revolution were Bunce, Chenevard, Caldwell, Bigelow, Forbes, Goodwin, Oleott,²⁵ and Wadsworth.

Other towns on the River which participated in the West Indian trade to an important extent included Saybrook, Essex, East Haddam, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and Windsor.²⁶ Windsor (including East Windsor) probably was the most active of these towns in the trade as it then vied with Hartford in amount of activity.²⁷ One of the merchant leaders of the area was Captain Ebenezer Grant, foremost among those in East Windsor.

²² Chafee, pp. 20-21.

²³ Griswold, p. 467; Early Lebanon, Appendix 90.

²⁴ Griswold, p. 467.

²⁵ Charles W. Burpee, History of Hartford County, I, 223.

²⁶ M. Louise Greene, "Old Saybrook Sketches," New England Magazine, XLVIII, 88; Hicks, p. 225; Griswold, p. 467.

²⁷ Stoughton, p. 28.

He dealt chiefly with Samuel Olcott, and Samuel and Jonathan Welch of Antigua.²⁸

There is every evidence from his accounts that he handled large amounts of goods and prospered. One specific transaction of his in 1774 involved the purchase of six hogsheads (652 gallons) of Jamaica rum received through Captain Samuel Guilford from Kingston. The shipment was valued at £130 8sh. for which a bill was rendered.²⁹ Grant's account in an earlier transaction, in 1771, was credited for items sold by Jonathan Wadsworth at Barbados as follows:³⁰

The following table of trade credited for the French and Dutch Islands

By Sorril horse	Sold	22	10	0
By Black D ^o		26	0	0
By Gray Mair		24	0	0
By Sorril Horse		24	0	0
By Bay D ^o		22		
By Sorril D ^o		19		
By Iron gray		16	0	0
By 119 1/2 lb. Cheese	Sold	1	10	0

In February, 1773 Grant's agent in the West Indies, George Butler, credited him with the sale of these items:³¹

Tallow	5	5	0
5 lb. pork	26	5	0
16 half lbs. of pork	40	8	0
310 wt. of cheese	10	4	4
2 casks tobacco	12	6	2
1 bbl. tobacco	2	13	3
4 horses	94	15	10
14 casks & 5 bbs. of tobacco	93	8	10
	£ 300	5	7

²⁸ Stiles, p. 483.

²⁹ Grant Papers, Doc. 293.

³⁰ Ibid., Doc. 29.

³¹ Ibid., Doc. 292.

Reference has already been made to the fact that much trading went on with the French and Dutch West Indies. As already stated, Nathaniel Shaw specialized in trade with Haiti, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Eustatius, as well as with less important islands.³² The British Government frowned upon this trade, but it boomed as never before in the decade preceding the Revolution.

One can say safely that the merchants of Connecticut sought the best market in the West Indian area, regardless of the mother country of the particular island.

The same pattern of trade prevailed for the French and Dutch islands as for the British. They had the same type of economy, the same products, chiefly sugar and molasses, and the same needs in the way of food, livestock, lumber, etc. David Wooster stated that New Haven shipped to the French West Indies "horses, oxen, and lumber, and receive[d] in return, sugar and molasses to the amount of about £3000 sterling annually."³³

Only St. Eustatius, the small rocky Dutch island, varied from the pattern. It had practically no surplus products of its own, but it served as a point of transshipment and exchange in the various triangular trading routes. Later, during the Revolution, St. Eustatius, because it was a strategic neutral port, quickly attained an enormous importance to the American colonies.³⁴

³² Rogers, p. 6.

³³ "Statistics of New Haven," loc. cit., p. 218.

³⁴ J. Franklin Jameson, "St. Eustatius in the American Revolution," American Historical Review, VIII (July, 1903), 683-708, gives an excellent account of St. Eustatius' important role.

Even during the Seven Years (French and Indian) War the commerce with the French West Indies continued on a large scale, an act of deliberate disloyalty to the Mother Country. To Connecticut and other New England merchants, the French in the West Indies just were not enemies, but rather, valuable commercial friends. Various shifts and devices were employed to outwit the British government. The favorite stratagem perhaps was to trade through the neutral ports of Curacao (Dutch), St. Eustatius (Dutch), Monte Cristi (Spanish), and Santo Domingo (Spanish). Upon one occasion in 1769 a British sloop checked upon the ships in Monte Cristi and found no less than twenty-eight from English mainland colonies, including four from Connecticut.³⁵ Eventually, in 1762, General Amherst, enraged by the clandestine traffic, clamped an embargo upon the trade of the New England and middle colonies. The war ended soon thereafter so that the effects were not serious.

Nathaniel Shaw had extensive dealings with many French firms, such as the Constants at Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe, and the Galignards at Le Cap, Haiti.³⁶ A letter to William Packwood, Shaw's agent at St. Pierre, Martinique reveals something of the main problems inherent in the commerce.³⁷

"Sir I Received yours of the 2 of March last which gave me great Joy to hear of the Arivall of the Imoretia since that I have not Recd any of your Favours--your Brother Joseph is not Arived which gives me much Concern as I have not Recd any Accott of

³⁵ G. L. Beer, British Colonial Policy (New York, 1907), p. 98 fn.

³⁶ Rogers, p. 7.

³⁷ Nathaniel Shaw to William Packwood, May 6, 1766, in Rogers, p. 176.

him Since he left Martinecoo—I have Procured the Insurance you wrote for in New York att three & half p Ct.—Sugars are now much fain in Price by the great Quantity Ariving from St Croix and if you have more Casks than will Purchase a Load of Molasses you had best Purchase Cotten as that Article is in great Demand. I begg you'll write by every Opportunity. In case Your Brother Arives I will fitt him out with a Cargoe Imeditly...."

From [unclear], [unclear]
[unclear]

The speculative nature of the trade and its extreme sensitiveness to the state of international politics find reflection in the news sent by Simeon Deane from a French port in the West Indies to his good friend, Joseph Webb, late in the spring of 1775.³⁸

"Had the news of the late disturbance in America arriv'd two days sooner, it would have made difference of £100 or upwards in my flour only; other articles, except pork and beef, are much the same, tho' the latter do not rise as flour, which is here about 32 p^r C. and rising, for the common, and higher for superfine."

On June 2, 1775 Deane wrote: "There are now many American vessels loaded at the French ports with molasses, but dare not sail till further intelligence from America."³⁹

In summing up the West Indian trade of colonial Connecticut it is useful to list the chief articles of export and import.⁴⁰

³⁸ C.H.S.C., II, 249-250.

³⁹ C.H.S.C., II, 251.

⁴⁰ No pretense at completeness is made. Starred items are considered especially important.

I. Exports**Food and Drink**

Apples
Cider
Cider Brandy
Butter
Cheese
Fish (shad, herring)
Flour
Bread
Onions
Rum
Beef
Pork

Wood Products

Boards
Clapboards
Clift boards
Hoops*
Headings*
Staves*
Shingles

Miscellaneous

Tobacco
Bricks
Tallow

Live Stock

Horses*
Cows
Oxen*
Mules*
Hogs
Sheep
Poultry

Imports

Melasses*
Sugar*
Rum
Coffee
Bills of Exchange*

Salt
Hides
Fruit (limes, etc.)
Cocoa
Pimento

CHAPTER XI

Richard Jackson, Governor of Connecticut, sent at London in 1747, wrote Jonathan Bidwell about the problems and possibilities of increasing direct trade with England. Bidwell had suggested sugar, iron, and hemp as items which

At first glance it would seem that Connecticut should have a fairly substantial direct trade with England, but such was not the case. The basic cause already has been cited,—Connecticut's lack of staple products which England needed and wanted. Connecticut in her produce was too much like England. Connecticut's agricultural staples, if anything, were beef and pork; but these could not compete in European markets, except in periods of great scarcity there.¹

Efforts had been made to develop an important direct trade as leaders both in London and in Connecticut realized the mutual benefits which would ensue. In 1747 the general assembly passed an act to encourage direct trade with the British isles. A bounty of five pounds on the hundred on goods imported directly from England was authorized, and an equal duty on imports from neighboring colonies.² An addition to this act in October, 1748 noted that "divers persons" had imported goods under the encouragement of the earlier act, and they should be paid the import bounty promptly.³ In practice, the acts proved to be almost complete failures, and trade continued to flow in its old channels, that is, mostly to neighboring colonies. Few merchants were found who would risk direct trips to the British Isles.⁴

¹ Bidwell, p. 133.

² C. R. IX, pp. 283-285.

³ C. R. IX, pp. 394-395.

⁴ Hooker, pp. 32-33.

Richard Jackson, Connecticut's agent at London in 1767, wrote Jonathan Trumbull about the problems and possibilities of increased direct trade with England. Trumbull had suggested masts, iron, and hemp as items which should be produced in large quantities by Connecticut for the Mother Country. Jackson was pessimistic about prospects in these items, but saw hope in corn, wheat, barley, potash, and timber.⁵

The official returns of 1774 to the Board of Trade were unimpressive. Exports to England were described as "Pot and Pearl Ashes, Lumber, and some salted Provisions; the annual amount at an average may be £10,000 Sterling."⁶ While the valuation may be an underestimate, it is certain that the direct trade with Britain amounted only to a trickle compared with the coastal and West Indian trade. In the same report, an annual inflow of British goods to the value of £200,000 was admitted. This came mostly by way of Boston and New York, so that the overwhelming proportion of British goods reached Connecticut by indirect routes. New Haven reported a direct importation of only £4000 annually on an average for the early 1770's.⁷ In a half-apologetic tone the Connecticut reports to the Board of Trade for 1748, 1756, 1762, and 1774 all explain with reference to the smallness of the direct trade that measures had been undertaken to encourage more direct trade with the British Isles.

One of the few Connecticut merchants who traded directly with England was Jonathan Trumbull. From the 1750's on, in association with partners, first as "Williams, Trumbull and Pitkin" (1750-64), later as "Trumbull,

⁵ C.H.S.C., XIX, *The Pitkin Papers*, 99-103.

⁶ C. R. XIV, 498.

⁷ *Statistics of New Haven*, *loc. cit.*, p. 217.

Pitch and Trumbull" (1764-1767), he carried on a brisk trade, not only with the West Indies, but also with England, Holland, and Hamburg.⁸ The firm's ships stopped chiefly at Liverpool, Bristol, and London. Trumbull's chief mercantile correspondents in England and Ireland were Samuel Sparrow, Lane and Booth, Hayley and Champion, all in London; Campbell and Hays, in Liverpool; Stephen Apthorp in Bristol; Robert and Alexander Joffray in Dublin; Frances Goold and Company in Cork. In the 1760's reverses set in as ships were lost, investments depreciated, and the firm failed. Trumbull, however, continued his English trading on a smaller scale until the Revolution.⁹

Nathaniel Shaw occasionally sent a ship directly to England. In May, 1772 he dispatched the sloop Dove with a cargo of molasses, coffee, brown sugar, and a bag of cotton wool which he had found to be surplus from a West Indian venture.¹⁰

In another transaction with a London firm he asked to be sent nails, sheathing, Russian duck, hemp, a large scale, silver watch, spy-glass, two-dozen white hose, four yards of scarlet cloth, and a piece of kersey, which is fairly typical of Connecticut imports from England.¹¹ Household furnishings, especially of the finer sort such as furniture, chinaware, East India goods (spices), glass, ribbons, crepes, laces, snuff, and woollen fabrics ranked high among the other imports.¹²

⁸ I. W. Stuart, Life of Jonathan Trumbull (Boston, 1859), pp. 65-66, 69.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 67, 115-116; Caulkins, Norwich, p. 312; Trumbull, Trumbull, pp. 64-72.

¹⁰ Caulkins, New London, p. 484.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Caulkins, Norwich, p. 311; Martin, p. 14.

There was a small but steady trade to Ireland, both direct and indirect, of which flaxseed constituted the *raison d'être*.¹³ The main product imported in turn, directly or indirectly, was Irish linen.

A considerable amount of flaxseed was exported from New Haven. Captain Peter Bontecou, for example, made numerous voyages to Cork, Ireland in his bark, the Hawk, of forty-seven tons, loaded with flaxseed. On his return he very likely stopped at the West Indies to sell English and Irish goods and pick up a promising cargo for the New Haven market.¹⁴ In the year ending May, 1774, New Haven sent out 150,000 pounds of flaxseed.¹⁵

Other towns and individuals also participated in this trade. Wethersfield sent considerable flaxseed--a new development of the decade, or so, before the Revolution.¹⁶ The Trumbull firm likewise had an occasional ship in Irish waters.¹⁷

Trade with the Continental European powers was very small and unimportant. Mention has already been made of Trumbull's trade with Amsterdam and with Hamburg.¹⁸ French goods seem to have been obtained almost entirely by way of Boston or New York.¹⁹ To Portugal, Spain, and

¹³ C. R. XIV, 498.

¹⁴ Trowbridge, p. 113.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁶ George Clark, Silas Doane (New York, 1913), p. 11; Elcks, p. 225.

¹⁷ Caulkins, Norwich, p. 312.

¹⁸ Trumbull dealt with Caspar Voght and Company, one of the wealthiest firms in Hamburg. Stuart, p. 67.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹ Martin, p. 14.

Ibid., p. 14-21; C. R. VI, 101.

Colonial Trade with South America and Africa

The trade of Connecticut with South America and Africa was an occasional affair which amounted to a very small total in number and value.²⁴ Yet, the trade should not be ignored.

The brig Two Brothers of Rocky Hill, for example, cruised as far as Dutch Guiana with a cargo consisting of twenty-five tierces of tobacco, seventy-six bushels of oats, sixty bundles of oak staves, twenty-eight barrels of flour, some onions, and a large quantity of bricks.²⁵

In October, 1758 Gurdon Saltonstall of New London wrote to Jared Ingersoll asking the latter's good offices in getting a permit from the Governor to ship one hundred barrels of beef and pork, the same amount of flour, and forty horses to Surinam, Dutch Guiana. He expected to get the flour at New York and the other items locally. He assured Ingersoll that the goods could not possibly be intended for the French.²⁶

The trade with Africa occupied more ships, though only a trifle as compared with those on West Indian commerce. In 1762 the Governor reported to the Board of Trade that Connecticut had "also some few vessels to the coast of Guinea."²⁷

The slave trade was not advertised by participants, but an unusually long absence of a trip in southern waters set tongues to wagging. Two

²⁴ See tables on pp. 146-147.

²⁵ Weeden, pp. 757-758.

²⁶ Ingersoll Papers, 217:16.

²⁷ C. R. XI, 629.

round trips yearly to the West Indies were generally made from Connecticut parts. But if a ship sailed for the West Indies and returned a good nine months to a year later, without any English or south European goods, it was a safe bet that a "live cargo" had been taken from West Africa to Virginia or nearby.²⁸ A report for 1770 gives Connecticut's exports to Africa as £7814 19sh. 8p.; but imports from Africa for all of New England as only £180.²⁹

It has already been shown in the study of population that Connecticut had a large number of Negroes.³⁰ Yet, one gets little official information about their arrival. In 1709 the Governor and Council informed the Board of Trade that not a single Connecticut ship had imported any Negroes since 1698, and that sometimes about six a year came from the West Indies.³¹

Negroes were found in New Haven as early as 1664, but by 1680 Governor Leete reported only three or four yearly coming in from Barbados. Occasionally, a Connecticut captain was lost off the African coast.³²

It is known that Middletown and Rocky Hill ships were engaged in slave trading on a small scale.³³ At least three Middletown captains, D. Walker, Gleason, and Easton, at one time were involved in the trade.³⁴

²⁸ Griswold, p. 467.

²⁹ Van Metre, Economic History of the United States, p. 102. The difference is probably due to the landing of the slaves at distant ports--perhaps in the West Indies.

³⁰ See pp. 37-40.

³¹ Elizabeth Donnan, History of Slave Trade (Washington, 1931), II, 106.

³² Ibid., pp. 1-3.

³³ Griswold, p. 467; Fowler, pp. 16-17.

³⁴ Fowler, p. 124.

The Mediterranean trade attracted a few Connecticut ships³⁵ including an occasional one to the Barbary Coast,³⁶ with a cargo usually of flour, lumber, New England rum, and "stores for muling."³⁷

³⁵ C. R. XI, 629.

³⁶ "Statisticks of New London," p. 219.

³⁷ Benjamin P. Adams, "The Last Years of Connecticut under the British Crown," Connecticut Magazine, I, 224; C. R., XIV, 498.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADE STORY.

1775-1783.

AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

1990

1. The first of these is the fact that the majority of the population of the United States is now living in urban areas. This is a result of the process of urbanization, which has been going on since the beginning of the 20th century. The population of the United States has increased from about 100 million in 1900 to over 200 million in 1950, and the majority of this increase has been in urban areas. This has led to a concentration of population in a few large cities, which has in turn led to a number of problems, such as overcrowding, pollution, and traffic congestion.

... ..

CHAPTER XII

The Coming of the War

The passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 produced immediate political repercussions in Connecticut.¹ The colony sent representatives to the Stamp Act Congress, but they were instructed to tread warily, which they did. Connecticut separately sent the resolves of the Congress on to its agent in London to present to the King and the two houses of Parliament.² The non-importation agreements affected Connecticut chiefly through the great reduction in trade with England from Boston and New York, where most English goods to Connecticut were normally received. In any case, the speedy repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 meant that its effect was very temporary and caused only a slight brief dislocation in Connecticut's trading pattern.

The Townshend Acts actually affected Connecticut more deeply economically. Following the lead of Boston, several Connecticut towns early in 1768 adopted non-consumption agreements.³ In April, 1769 New York merchants called upon those in New Haven to adopt the same measures as already adopted in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. On July 10th New Haven merchants reached a non-consumption agreement, and it had wide effect in the Colony. The lower house, controlled by farmers, at the October session of 1768, expressed approval of the merchants' actions.⁴

¹As already pointed out, Governor Fitch's adherence to the law and appointment of stamp collectors caused his defeat at the next election by William Pitkin.

²C. R. XIV, 420-425.

³Schlesinger, p. 112. Norwich took the lead, and was followed by New London, Windham, Mansfield, and New Haven.

⁴Ibid., pp. 150-151.

It should be noted that the non-importation agreements were fundamentally self-denying ordinances which tended to have a boomeranging effect upon their originators.

Connecticut merchants, slow at the start, soon gave enthusiastic support to the agreements as long as they were in effect, despite increasing numbers of violations in New York and Rhode Island as time passed.⁵ A general meeting of merchants and others was held at New Haven at which time resolutions censuring the violators of the agreement were passed.⁶ Committees of inspection were set up to enforce the agreement against importation of British goods, and public opinion generally supported them. Observance was not easy as the lack of British manufactures imposed real privations for many, as homemade products could not take up the slack and were too expensive in addition.

The decisive breakdown of the agreements occurred at New York in 1770, which was soon after the repeal of all the taxes but tea. However, Connecticut merchants clung to them longer than this. A meeting of merchants from all over Connecticut at Middletown in February, 1770 brought adoption of stronger non-importation resolutions; but by May, 1771, even in Connecticut, goods forbidden by the Middletown agreement were openly imported.⁷

The period from 1765-1770 had been one characterized by strong differences of opinion and even some open clashes between the Mother Country and the Americans. From a long range viewpoint, however, these

⁵ Boardman, pp. 102, 107-109; C.C.S. II, 44.

⁶ Gideon H. Hollister, History of Connecticut, II, 124.

⁷ Schlesinger, p. 151; Boardman, p. 109.

clashes cannot be considered as serious. The various trade acts, the Stamp Act, and the Townsend Act precipitated strong resistance in America; but in each case a modus vivendi was found before an important independence movement developed.

The next two or three years brought a marked lull in the storm. In fact, relations between England and the American Colonies reassumed generally the friendly tone of the pre-1760 years of "salutary neglect." Most Americans seemed happy to settle back into their traditional peaceful grooves of political, social, and economic activity as loyal members of the Empire. The British ministry under Lord North, however, apparently did not believe in Walpole's famous injunction regarding the Colonials; namely, to "let sleeping dogs lie!" As a result, in 1773 the Tea Act was passed. It produced violent American protests which reached a climax in the Boston Tea Party and struck spark to the tender gathered by Sam Adams and his "radical" friends. There was tremendous excitement throughout Connecticut, and events concerning Massachusetts were followed with close attention. To the blockaded Bostonians were forwarded large relief donations, mostly in the form of livestock and produce. Lebanon sent 375 fat sheep by Captain Elijah Hyde, and promised £30 worth of beef cattle soon.⁸ Other contributions flowed in from many towns including Norwich (sheep), Farmington (rye and corn), Wethersfield (wheat, rye, corn), Groton (sheep, cattle, rye, corn), Hartford (736 bushels rye, 111 bushels corn), Coventry (sheep), Woodstock (sheep), Fairfield (grain), Tolland (sheep), and Waterbury (rye, wheat, flour).⁹

⁸ Letter from Lebanon to Boston, August 8, 1774 in M.H.S.C., XXXIV, 42-45.

⁹ M.H.S.C., XXXIV, 8, 14, 18, 45, 48, 72, 89, 96, 98, 100, 103, 107, 128, 133, 136.

The deepening political crisis cast its shadow over Connecticut throughout 1774 and early 1775. The spirit of resistance was waxing strong. In May, 1774 the general assembly approved a Declaration of Rights and Liberties--a notable statement impelled by the Intolerable Acts. In it the Connecticut lawmakers staunchly affirmed their right to self-government as set down in the liberal Charter of 1662 and attacked specifically the closure of ports and the erection of the new Admiralty Courts.¹⁰

In deep alarm over and grave protest against the Coercive (Intolerable) Acts of 1774, the first Continental Congress met at Philadelphia in September, 1774. Connecticut was ably represented by Roger Sherman, Eliphalet Dyer, and Silas Deane.¹¹ The passage by the Congress of the resolve calling for the Continental Association did not find Connecticut unprepared. In fact, certain elements in the Colony had anticipated the measure. About three months earlier, the town meeting of New London had passed a resolve urging Congress "to stop all Imports and Exports to and from Great Britain."¹² Two months later delegates from New London and Windham Counties in session at Norwich sent a letter to the Congress pointing out the impracticability of a non-importation agreement without a "Non-consumption Agreement."¹³

In Hartford, too, sentiment was rising for action to boycott British goods. At the town meeting of September 2, 1774 a non-consumption

¹⁰ C. R. XIV, 347-349.

¹¹ C. R. XIV, 324 ftn., 325 ftn.

¹² Gazette, July 1, 1774 (meeting held on June 27, 1774).

¹³ Connecticut Miscellaneous Papers, 1637-1783.

agreement was proposed, as was a meeting of all the county's towns to take place at Hartford.¹⁴ Earlier, the Committee of Correspondence had decided to invite all the towns in the Colony to a meeting on non-consumption on September 15.¹⁵

The meeting took place on schedule with delegates actually present from all towns except a few in Litchfield County. William Wolcott acted as chairman, and Samuel Wyllys, as clerk. The resolutions adopted afford an excellent picture of the temper of the times among the more "radical" merchants.

This Meeting taking into their serious consideration the absolute necessity of a non-consumption agreement, as shall be recommended by the general Congress of Delegates from all the free British Colonies in America, now convened at Philadelphia, and also that their opinion and resolution thereon hath not been yet fully made known to the Delegates from this Colony in said Congress.

Do Declare and Resolve, That, in case the said general Congress shall recommend a non-importation of British goods only, or of British and West India goods, we will enter into a solemn contract and agreement not to purchase or consume any articles that shall be prohibited by such non-importation agreement, and use our utmost endeavours to render the same general and effectual; and we do hereby make known that we have, in general, been assured, by the towns we represent, that they will readily accede to, adopt, and religiously observe such non-consumption agreement, as aforesaid.

And whereas this meeting is informed that great quantities of English and India goods are ordered by sundry sordid and avaricious men, in our neighbouring Colonies, to be purchased in Ireland, and imported this fall, to give them an unreasonable advantage, and prevent the salutary effects of a non-importation agreement,

Resolved, That such mercenary wretches, ... are wholly unworthy of our confidence, friendship, or support; and, that our non-consumption agreement may be useful to any good purpose, we will not purchase any merchandise of them, or transact any business for them, or suffer them to transact any for us, but will wholly withdraw from them, ...

¹⁴ Gazette, September 2, 1774.

¹⁵ C. C., August 23, 1774.

Resolved, That the Committees of Correspondence ... be desired to make diligent inquiry after the persons who have ordered goods, as aforesaid, and inform the next County and Colony Meeting of what they shall discover, that their names may be published, their conduct exposed, and their persons avoided.

Resolved, That if any merchant or trader in the towns aforesaid, shall attempt to engross any great or unusual quantity of goods, with design to forestall and elude a non-importation agreement, we will find ways and means, without violating his private rights, to defeat his views, and make him sensible that virtue and publick spirit will be more for his interest, than low selfishness and avarice can be.¹⁶

On October 20, 1774 the Continental Congress adopted the famous Association whereby the members pledged that, unless Great Britain acceded to their demands, they would not import a list of British goods after December 1, 1774, that they would not use tea after March 1, 1775, and that they would cut off exports to Britain effective September 10, 1775. Article XI provided for the establishment of a committee in every town to observe and advertise violators as "enemies of American liberty," and to inspect customs entries and seize any goods imported contrary to the Association. The agreement proved to be of great significance, for it forced most persons to take an open stand on a specific major issue of resistance to the British government, and it particularly applied to and affected the merchant class. The importers and exporters faced a thorough disruption of trade and even the local merchant had to make a profound readjustment as the normal pattern of overseas trade was broken up, and the supply of goods from abroad disappeared.

The year and a half after the passage of the Continental Association saw a vigorous effort to enforce the plan with varying degrees of success. Probably, the decisive factor in each town was the force of public opinion. If it strongly supported the Association, few, if any, merchants would

dare to flout the agreement. Moreover, the abilities and enthusiasm of the local committee of inspection were vitally important.

The towns responded fairly rapidly to the action of Congress. On November 14 the New Haven town meeting approved the organization of a committee of thirty-one to enforce the Association. In December, the committee was increased to fifty-one.¹⁷ Hartford quickly followed New Haven's precedent by resolving to maintain the Association at the town meeting of December 20.¹⁸ The committees of the towns of the County, soon thereafter, convened to work out common methods for enforcing the Association.

Not every town, however, voted compliance. New Milford was one of those which refused to abide by the agreement. There, one hundred and twenty persons "much alarmed at the horrible prospect of anarchy and confusion" signed a protest against the Association and carefully acknowledged the sovereignty of the King and the rights of Parliament.¹⁹

The methods and principles adopted by committees in Hartford County deserve attention. They resolved, first of all, to discharge their duties vigilantly. Violators of the Association were to receive written summons to appear within six days. If found guilty, a person would be publicly branded as an enemy of the country. They would not exculpate those dealing with importers who raised prices above levels prevailing the previous twelve months. Every importer was expected to inform the committee about each importation and have the goods passed. Strenuous efforts should be made to increase the number of sheep, and more broadly,

¹⁷ Beardman, p. 125.

¹⁸ C. C., December 26, 1774.

¹⁹ Force, 4th Ser., I, 1270.

to improve agriculture and manufacturing in order to lessen dependence upon Britain. They next disavowed any intention of seeking independence, but declared they merely wanted orderly government under their Charter. Finally, the towns recommended that subscribers to the slanderous Rivington's Gazette cancel their orders. Such were the policies and viewpoints of the men responsible for enforcement of the Association in and near Hartford.

The proceedings of Hartford County set the example for the other counties. On January 30 a New London County meeting approved them, and New Haven and Litchfield Counties came into line by February.²⁰ The newspapers gave ample publicity to the Committees and their activities. Apparently, they proceeded cautiously at first, undoubtedly to allow merchants to get adjusted to the new order of things. There was an evident reluctance to damn a neighbor's reputation by holding him up to public opprobrium.

In Norwich the committee of inspection quickly sprang into action. It gave notice that on January 24, 1775 three chests and six casks of "apothecaries drugs" imported in the ship Lady Gage from London via New York since last December first would be sold.²¹

Among the earliest cases advertised in Hartford was that of Joshua Holcomb of Simsbury who was found "obstinately fixed in full opposition to the spirit and meaning of said association" whereby he was to be treated with "neglect and contempt" for his "incorrigible enmity to the rights

²⁰ C. C., February 6, 27, 1775.

²¹ Gazette, January 20, 1775. According to the Association no English goods could be imported after December 1, 1774.

of British America."²²

An interesting case handled by the Hartford committee occurred in the fall of 1775. Peter Verstillle, Josiah Gibbs, and Stephen Mears, merchants, were found guilty of violating the ninth article of the Association by selling certain merchandise at excessive prices. Mears even refused to appear before the Committee. All persons were ordered, therefore, not to have further dealings with any of the trio. At the same time, the committee announced that no person could move into Hartford to settle without delivering a certificate from his home town to the effect that he was friendly to American liberties.²³

Public disapproval quickly had its effect. By December the trio no longer cared to breast the tide. They appeared before the committee with a signed statement to the effect that they had violated the ninth article and had been published in the Courant and thus punished. Now they were determined to observe strictly the Association and wished, therefore, the esteem and confidence of all friends of American liberty. The committee voted this statement satisfactory.²⁴

On April 8, 1776 Ebenezer Watson, publisher of the Courant, began publishing the public enemies with this explanation:

ALL Persons inimical to the Country, that are living up to View in the CONNECTICUT COURANT, by the Committees of Inspection; will have their Names, and Places of Abode published in this Part of the Paper weekly, till a deep Sense of their Guilt, and Promise of Amendment, shall restore them to the Favors of their insulted Country.

N.B. The Committees of Inspection are desired to receive

²²C. C., August 28, 1775.

²³December 4, 1775. The case came up early in October.

²⁴January 15, 1776.

no Confession from any Person within the above Description, till he has advanced one DOLLAR, to pay the Printer for his Trouble in publishing such Confession.

PERSONS held up to PUBLIC VIEW, as
ENEMIES to their COUNTRY.

Jonathan Hill, Alford, Massachusetts Bay.
Stephen Sears, Sharon, Connecticut,
Lieut. Ebenezer Orvis, Farmington, ditto."

The list tended to grow longer as the spring and summer passed and independence was declared. In late July it contained ten names. The September 23, 1776 list was the longest one, however, with fourteen names; and it also was the final one. The rapid disappearance of most names on the list bears strong testimony to the power of majority public opinion in curbing the tendencies of a dissident minority. As a matter of fact, even the recalcitrants in New Milford soon changed their tune and sent in a signed statement to the newspapers in which they announced their conversion.²⁵

The committee stirred up much interest and opposition in the course of their work. "Philopolites" in the Courant on January 23, 1776 emphasized the great importance of their task, urged the utmost care in watching the merchants, and asked the strictest observance of the Association. "Polemoscope," on the other hand, took issue with the action of a country-wide meeting at Hartford on March 27, 1776 in setting the price of Muscovado sugar at sixteen shillings per 250 pounds. This was, he declared, below the usual peacetime price whereas costs had risen forty per cent. The merchants already were discouraged; and, if this act were enforced, they would let people go without such articles.²⁶

²⁵

C. C., April 1, 1776.

²⁶

April 15, 1776.

It is probable that in 1775-76 the Association created more excitement and emotion than it did serious economic effect upon the trade of Connecticut. True enough, it severed the ties of direct trade with Britain. More important, the chief supply centers for Connecticut--Boston and New York--were cut off from British goods. The stock of British goods on hand on December 1, 1774 was, however, large enough to prevent undue shortage and suffering for a good many months afterward. It provided a period for readjustment to changed conditions, for stimulation of home manufactures, and for location of new sources and new markets. Some merchants did suffer from lack of British goods and found the adjustment hard. Others, openly or covertly violated the Association, but they constituted a tiny minority, and most of them quickly were convinced of the error of their ways.

Meanwhile, in the sphere of politics, great developments were being shaped. The Continental Association served as a rallying-point for the patriots. Trade with the Mother Country fell off tremendously; in fact, it nearly stopped. A well-defined split between Patriots and Loyalists now took place, and fence-sitting became increasingly difficult to achieve. Hostility to Britain's program centered in Massachusetts, which colony was the special objective of the Coercive Acts. Connecticut felt strong bonds of sympathy with the beleaguered patriots of her neighbor, and evinced it by sending relief supplies, as already described.

The Loyalist element in Connecticut exercised a significant economic influence during the War. Loyalists probably constituted only about one-thirteenth, or eight per cent, of the total population

in 1775.²⁷ The line of demarcation between Patriot and Loyalists fundamentally was one of religion, with Patriots being Congregationalists, and Loyalists, Anglicans.²⁸ Although Loyalists were not numerous in Connecticut, they probably formed a larger proportion of the State's population than did the Loyalists in Massachusetts, Maine, or New Hampshire.²⁹ The Loyalists offered a serious threat in Connecticut because they were dangerously concentrated in one section--Fairfield County. They comprised about one-third the population of that strategic County,³⁰ located close to New York City, a hot-bed of Toryism. In other words, the Connecticut Tories were clustered in the precise area where they could do the maximum amount of harm to the Patriot cause in political, military, and economic realms. In the economic sphere these harmful activities chiefly took the form of illicit trade by land and water with the Long Island-New York City section, which subject will be

²⁷ Two different methods of calculation have been employed to obtain this figure. The first is to find the number of Anglicans, and automatically class all Anglicans as loyalists. There must have been a few Patriot Anglicans, but the few exceptions were undoubtedly compensated for by defections from the Congregationalist majority. E. E. Beardsley, an early authority on the Anglicans in Connecticut, set the total of Anglicans as one in thirteen in his work, The Episcopal Church in Connecticut, pp. 288-289. The second method is to take the estimate of Lorenzo Sabine in the American Loyalists, vol. I (Quoted in George Gilbert, "The Connecticut Loyalists," A.H.R., IV, 280) that there were 2000 loyalists in the militia. Since the militia rolls totalled 26,000 in 1775, the one-thirteenth figure resulted. Oscar Zeichner in his excellent article, "The Rehabilitation of Loyalists in Connecticut," New England Quarterly, XI, 309, in general agrees with these figures.

²⁸ Epiphroditus Peck, The Loyalists of Connecticut (Publications of the Tercentenary Commission of Connecticut, No. 31), p. 3. Also, The Quakers, a tiny minority, were generally Loyalists. Franklin B. Dexter, Notes on Some of the New Haven Loyalists, Papers of the New Haven Historical Society, vol. IX, 37.

²⁹ Sabine, I, 16.

³⁰ Beardsley, p. 289.

discussed later.³¹ The towns of Stratford, Newtown, and New Haven contained unusually large numbers of Loyalists;³² but Patriots controlled even those towns from the very start of the War.

A spirit of preparedness had evidenced itself at the October, 1774 session of the general assembly, especially in the way of calling for extra militia drills and expanding militia organization.³³ The towns were ordered to collect twice the usual amount of powder, ball, and flints,³⁴ which required considerable effort.

Connecticut leaders decided to make their own effort to persuade the British government to change its policies toward the American colonies. In March, 1775 Governor Trumbull wrote a letter, approved by the legislature, to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for American affairs. The letter constituted a vigorous protest against recent British policies, but at the same time a reaffirmation of loyalty to the Crown. Trumbull expressed grave concern over the situation in Massachusetts and the unduly harsh treatment accorded her. The letter closed with a plea for "some wise and happy plan" to restore harmonious relations between Britain and the colonies.³⁵

The Governor's sincere effort for conciliation came too late. His words were drowned in the maelstrom of fiery events which quickly followed.

³¹ See pp. 359-362.

³² Robert O. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era, (New York, 1938), p. 219. Many businessmen of New Haven were Loyalists. Ibid.

³³ C. R. XIV, 327-329.

³⁴ C. R. XIV, 343.

³⁵ C. R. XIV, 410-412.

April 19, 1775 came and brought the famous engagements at Lexington and Concord, after which horsemen quickly galloped through Connecticut with the portentous news. Many crucial decisions confronted the anxious leaders of the Colony as they pondered the electrifying developments. In the economic sphere, as in others, the problems to be faced were numerous and very perplexing.

CHAPTER XIII

The Beginnings of Government Regulation (April, 1775-June, 1776)

The first step in governmental economic regulation in Connecticut occurred late in April, 1775 in the form of the imposition of an embargo. This step was followed in later years of the war by an extension of the embargo program and the gradual introduction of other forms of economic regulation. In the opening period of the struggle, from April, 1775 to the Declaration of Independence, the embargo provided the center of interest in the sphere of the economic history of the State.

The embargo has been a peculiarly interesting type of institution in American colonial economic history with its roots going far back into the early days of colonial settlements. Embargoes were employed in three main types of situations: (1) during times of peace; (2) on the eve of a war; (3) during a war. The motivation for laying an embargo varied according to the time, place, leaders, and general political and economic situation. In any case, the embargo fundamentally constitutes a form of economic pressure used consciously in an attempt to achieve certain definite ends, usually primarily political in nature.

Embargoes played a very important role in the economic history of Connecticut during the Revolution. The use of the embargo was firmly anchored in customs and precedents dating from the early colonial period. As far back as May, 1657 an embargo may be found in which the Colony prohibited the export of hides.¹ The next year it followed up this action by forbidding tanners to export leather except when required to

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C. R. I, 298.

purchase hides.²

The use of embargoes in the Revolution seemed natural; for the same weapon had been employed in all four of the intercolonial wars. They began with an act in April, 1690, during King William's War, that forbade the shipment of corn or other provisions on board any ship for three months without special license from the Governor or two assistants.³ Other acts followed during that struggle, Queen Anne's War, King George's War, and the French and Indian War.⁴

The practice of imposing embargoes in the late colonial period was not limited to wartime. In May, 1772 the general assembly voted for no exportation of wheat, corn, other grain, meal, and flour until July 15, 1772.⁵ In June Silas Deane, as spokesman for a group of Hartford County merchants, urged the continuance of the embargo. He pointed out that vessels were loading, and grain purchasers were everywhere; but the poor still were suffering from want of grain.⁶ In addition, thirty-six prominent citizens of the town of Hartford sent a hurried letter to the Governor imploring him to continue the embargo until the next session so that four or five vessels loading in anticipation of the embargo's

² C. R. III, 14.

³ C. R. IV, 16-17.

⁴ Embargo actions were taken as follows: in King William's War—1690, 1695, 1696, 1697 (repeal); in Queen Anne's War—1710, 1713, 1714 (repeal); King George's War—1744 and 1745; French and Indian War—1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, and 1762. See C. R. IV, 16-17, 154, 157, 160, 166, 200; V, 161, 417, 420 (repeal); IX, 88, 254; X, 350, 424, 461, 485, 550; XI, 22, 106; XII, 65.

⁵ C. R. XIII, 579-580.

⁶ A. T. P., III, Doc. 113.

expiration would not be able to leave.⁷ What, if anything, was done is unknown.⁸

From this brief survey of embargo legislation up to 1775, it is apparent that the embargo was already a well-established and familiar type of regulation in Connecticut.

In quick reaction to the opening of actual fighting came the first revolutionary embargo, that of April 26, 1775. It served as a sort of model for late legislation.

Resolved by this Assembly, That an Embargo be forthwith laid upon the exportation out of this Colony by water of the following articles of provision, vis: wheat, rye, indian corn, pork, beef, live cattle, pease and beans, bread fleur, and every kind of meal, except necessary stores for vessels bound to sea; and that his Honor the Governor be, and he is hereby, desired to issue a proclamation laying such embargo and prohibiting the exportation of such provisions accordingly: Such embargo to continue till the 20th day of May next."⁹

Since war had not been declared as yet, and independence would not be proclaimed for many months, this embargo could properly be classified in the second type, one passed on the eve of a war. This action suggests at least two observations. In first place, it deals only with basic foodstuffs, normally extensively exported from Connecticut. In second place, the extreme promptness of the action reflected a strong fear of imminent shortages in these basic items.

Almost immediately, certain merchants considered that they had legitimate cause to be exempted from the embargo for some specific

⁷ A. T. P., III, Doc. 114.

⁸ The Journals of this period for both the House and the Council are missing.

⁹ C. R. XIV, 415-416.

transaction. Among the first in the eight-year flood of petitions for exemption was that of Joseph Munson of New Haven. He asked permission to transport to the West Indies in his ship, Sea Flower, twenty-six head of cattle purchased for that purpose before the embargo was laid. The petition was granted.¹⁰

On the local town level, evidence of a deep interest in the embargo problem was evident from the start. In Norwich the Committee of Inspection was much perturbed about a possible shortage of molasses. On May 1, 1775 it voted unanimously that:¹¹

"At this alarming and Critical Situation of affairs in-- America, and the great need and Necessity in all probability we shall have of what Molasses we now have in the Colony, we therefore think it expedient that none of that Comodity be Transported to any other Colony; and we do advise that no person send any from this Town for the above Reason. We do also Advise for the above Reason that No Sugar be Shipd to any other Colony from this Town

Certify^d by me
Dudley Woodbridge Clerk."

The same committee was not satisfied to drop the matter with the action cited. On July 27 it sent a letter to Providence, Middletown, and New London asking whether it would not be wise to stop the distilling of molasses into rum due to the scarcity of molasses caused by the seizure of some American ships in the West Indies.¹²

At the May session, the general assembly continued the embargo until August with the proviso that the Governor, with consent of the Council, was empowered to discontinue it wholly or partly at any time, a

¹⁰ C. R. XIV, 439.

¹¹ W. G. Lane Collection.

¹² Ibid.

discretionary power which was included in most later embargoes.¹³ In July the Governor was authorized to grant permits for the export by water of live cattle and provisions, in such cases as he deemed wise.¹⁴

Connecticut's embargo soon was felt by her neighbors. In eastern Massachusetts, a grave food shortage developed, which caused the Massachusetts legislature to request that the inhabitants of the stricken area be permitted to purchase provisions in Connecticut and carry them to Massachusetts. The general assembly approved and gave the Governor discretionary power in such matters.¹⁵

In October, the general assembly enacted a new embargo law, almost exactly like that of April, 1775. The new law was to be in effect until June 1, 1776.¹⁶

By May, 1776 the legislature was confronted with a serious problem. "Sundry persons" were "ingrossing rum, sugar, molasses, salt, and other West India goods, with an interest to export the same out of this Colony."¹⁷ Therefore, it was voted to forbid the export of West Indian goods out of Connecticut by land or water on or before November 1, 1776. If such goods were needed, however, for the Continental army (especially rum), upon application by the Congress or General Washington, the Governor could grant a license for export.¹⁸

¹³ C. R. IV, 14-15. On August 17 the Governor and Council extended the embargo to October 20. C. R. IV, 119.

¹⁴ C. R. XV, 101.

¹⁵ C. R. XV, 105-106.

¹⁶ C. R. XV, 135. Butter and cheese were added.

¹⁷ C. R. XV, 314.

¹⁸ Ibid.

At the special session in June, 1776 it was time to reconsider the embargo problem as the basic law had expired. A new one was enacted that followed the same pattern of no export by water, except that pork could go out neither by water nor land.¹⁹

In the period of fourteen months from Lexington and Concord to the Declaration of Independence, Connecticut lawmakers, therefore, passed an impressive body of legislation dealing with the embargo problem. Driven by a fear of local food shortages in the Colony, they established embargoes; but they soon discovered that unforeseen complexities were involved. It did not take long to recognize the impossibility of an absolutely inflexible embargo. At least three sound reasons could be cited: (1) individual hardship cases of Connecticut merchants; (2) the suffering and danger of starvation in eastern Massachusetts; and (3) imperative needs of the Continental Army for West Indian goods. The old saying that "the Revolution was fought and won on rum" carries a semblance of truth. Despite the necessity for frequent exemptions it is probable that the embargo program did conserve a larger proportion of the Colony's agricultural produce for its people than would otherwise have been the case.

The need for intelligent handling of the first type of case above is obvious. By and large, judging from the decisions made upon individual cases in published and unpublished sources, one can say that both the general assembly and the Governor and council of safety showed great reasonableness and liberality in granting exemptions in the first

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This change was made by the lower house as an addition to the Act passed first by the upper house, A. R. W., IV, Doc. 306. Exports by land, however, were small as compared with those by water.

year and a half.

The second cause for exemptions tied in closely with the operation of the law of supply and demand. In Massachusetts at the start of the war a larger proportion of farmers joined the Continental Army and militia for active service, since the Boston area was the locale of the campaign. This produced a shortage of labor, and hence of production in the growing season of 1775. Prices, therefore, rose unduly on most necessities through the fall and winter, and soon climbed above the level in Connecticut where conditions were less abnormal. Connecticut farmers and merchants attracted by the more favorable prices in the Massachusetts market hastened to supply its deficiencies. This normal functioning of an open market appeared to hold dangerous possibilities for Connecticut's supply needs as a whole.²⁰ The result was the clapping of an embargo upon the export of supplies.

The embargo system produced significant economic repercussions beyond those already described. As is usual, the embargo backfired upon its sponsors. Many merchant ships were laid up and rotted away at the wharves. Large amounts of provisions were sold at lower prices in locally glutted markets, or at the low prices set by commissaries, or never found a buyer at all.²¹ The very frequency of the petitions to the legislature or Governor and Council indicate the magnitude of the whole problem. Furthermore, indirectly the embargo undoubtedly encouraged some owners of idle ships to transfer their attention to privateering.

In the first uncertain fourteen months of warfare, no other important

²⁰ Andrew M. Davis, "Trials of a Governor in the Revolution," M.H.S.C., XLVII, 138.

²¹ Royal R. Hinman, Historical Collection (Hartford, 1842), p. 547.

type of regulatory economic legislation was passed in Connecticut.

Attention was focussed upon organizing the militia for service and equipping it, and upon other military and political problems. Economic factors were not yet considered as very significant. Only the growing economic repercussions of the greatest military struggle yet in Connecticut's history would force consideration of these grave problems.

The first steps were taken, however, in this period in issuance of new "bills of credit," or paper money. A considerable sum was issued in the various missions of 1775 and early 1776. It took time, however, for their baneful influence to be felt in currency depreciation. A moderate weakening commenced before 1776 was over, but serious depreciation came later,²² so that regulatory action upon the currency was delayed.

²² See pp. 307-315 in reference to later depreciation and its effects.

1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000
1000	1000	1000	1000

Manufacturing and Mining in Wartime

I. Cloth and Clothing

The effects of warfare upon Connecticut's manufacturing were most marked and uneven. Many peacetime manufactures continued on an even keel, but some had to be abandoned. Even in peacetime, manufacturing was a very uncertain activity as multifarious handicaps existed. War added divers complicating factors to an already discouraging general situation. On the other hand, for some types of manufacture, unparalleled demand afforded a fine opportunity and incentive for high production and large profits.

The making of cloth and clothing affords an example of a manufacture which was greatly stimulated by wartime demands. Not only were uniforms needed, but all kinds of clothing were cut faster under the rigors of active service in the field. As has been seen earlier, most cloth goods and clothing were made in the home, and large-scale manufacture was confined to a few manufacturers like Christopher Leffingwell of Norwich. The fundamental pattern does not seem to have been altered much in the war, although some new firms entered the field.

Clothing needs for the militia and Continental Army (Connecticut Line) were not met generally by clothiers, but by levies upon the towns. Each town in turn put pressure upon individuals to help fill its quota. For example, one of the earliest requisitions for Continental supplies was that made by the Governor and Council of Safety on July 17, 1776 which called for the following:¹

¹C. R. XV, 482, 484.

<u>County</u>	<u>Coats and Waistcoats</u>	<u>Felt Hats</u>	<u>Shirts</u>	<u>Shoes</u>
Hartford	1000	800	1600	1600
New Haven	400	450	1000	900
New London	700	850	1400	1300
Fairfield	300	300	600	1000
Windham	400	400	1000	800
Litchfield	200	200	400	400

This requisition meant, in the final analysis, that each town was supposed to produce its share, which in actual practice proved most difficult.

Another example is found in an act of the legislature in October, 1777 which required each town to provide immediately one shirt, one hunting shirt, one pair of woolen "overalls," one or two pair(s) of stockings, and one pair of good shoes for each non-commissioned officer and soldier of the town in the Continental Army. Specified values were set for each item and impressment was permitted. Towns delinquent in quotas by January 1, 1778 could be fined £20.²

"State of Connecticut To the Select Men of Plainfield"

June 10, 1777

To 1 Blankett apprised @ 24/	£ 1	4	0
To 2 Blanketts apprised @ 50	2	10	0
To 1 Blankett @ 18/		18	0
To 4 Blankett @ 24/3	4	17	0
To 5 Blankets @ 28/5	7	2	1
To 137 W Lead @ 9	5	2	9
To running 137 W Lead into Bull[ets] 12/		12	
	£22	14	10

Sworn to by Andrew Backus, selectman of Plainfield.

A further examination of the supply problem in this and other aspects will be found at another place in this study.³

By and large, cloth and clothing manufacture was on a very small

² S. R. I, 421.

³ See Chap. XVII.

scale since the bulk of army clothing was made in individual homes. As an aid to such manufacture, Nathaniel Niles of Norwich, in 1775 established a place for making iron wire for cotton and wool cards. He found it difficult to get the enterprise going, so that he petitioned the general assembly for monetary encouragement. A committee was appointed to study the matter and authorized to allocate him not over £300 to be repaid without interest in four years.⁴

In 1777 James Wallace, a stocking weaver from abroad, sought from the legislature a loan of £100 to build stocking-frames and a machine to spin materials. Although he advertised himself as very skilled in making cotton, silk, and worsted stockings, his petition was rejected.⁵

In West Hartford and Farmington, there was an important cloth manufacturing industry, which fashioned a kind of woolen material.⁶ In Middletown, George Starr ran a sizeable shoe and leather goods factory. It was important enough for General Washington, at the proprietor's request, to ask Governor Trumbull to exempt his operatives from militia service.⁷ It seems probable that this was done. In East Greenwich, woolen spinning must have been quite important as the town fixed the wage for such work, apparently for women in household production.⁸ In Danbury, hats were already being made. On the northern edge of town stood a small hat factory, managed by Zadoc Benedict. He hired one journeyman

⁴ Arch., Industry, II, Docs. 151-152; C. R. XV, 81.

⁵ Bishop, p. 418.

⁶ Chastellux, pp. 37-39.

⁷ John Fitzpatrick, Writings of George Washington, XV, 284-285.

⁸ Cole, pp. 19-20, fth.

and two apprentices, and they managed to turn out three hats daily.⁹

The difficulty, however, was that the color of the hats was of national importance, for the people here said it was becoming blue because of the use of vital dyes. Identifying the color, the committee went to the end of 1890. Then they petitioned the legislature, and three days later the matter was referred to the committee on the subject of colors. The committee then reported that the color was not blue, and the matter was dropped.

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⁹ J. Moss Ives, "Danbury Leads the World in Hattling," Connecticut Magazine, VII, 627.

2. Distilling ... only one distillery was

The distilling business was one of the chief industries of colonial Connecticut; yet the legislature dealt it a resounding blow because of its use of vitally needed grains. Distilling apparently had continued unchecked until the end of 1776. When that session of the legislature met, three distillers, anticipating unfavorable action, petitioned the body at length. This trio, Josuines Erkelens, Mary Alsop, and Nathaniel Shaler declared as follows:

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"That your Mem^{ts} have at a great Expence erected a Distillery under an apprehension that a Manufacture of this Kind would be of Great Advantage to this Country in its present Situation ... that the long use of Spirituous liquors (whether Necessary or not) has been such that the Generality of the people of this Country have an Idea that they cannot do without them and by long habit, are so accustomed to the same that in the present Situation of Affairs, and restraint of our Trade with the West Indies & a people so accustomed, would with great Difficulty be prevailed on to abstain intirely from the Use thereof."

They proceeded to point out that France and Great Britain encouraged liquor production in several ways. Erkelens came to this country and went to great expense to set up works from which scarcely any return had been obtained yet.

"They further Apprehend that the pittance of Rye which they shall Distill will not contribute to enhance the Price of Grain in this State but will be Hig[hly] Beneficial by Keeping down the price of Liquor Occasioned by the Scarcity thereof and that their Distillery which will expend no more than 4000 Bushels of Rye P Annum will not raise the price of Rye more than one Single penny p^r bushel and also to this that the Avails of the Distillery in Grain which will feed and fatt a large number of Swine."

This would be as beneficial to Connecticut as the total loss involved in purchasing barley from Rhode Island. In view of all these factors the petitioners requested, therefore, that no law be passed without giving

them a hearing previously and that, if in the future, distillers were prohibited, the law should not affect distilleries already established.

This petition served to heighten the interest in the whole broad problem of whether to allow any distilling as a matter of policy. A committee which had been appointed to study this question reported to the December session with a negative recommendation which touched off a lengthy and warm discussion.¹¹ Although no direct action was taken on this particular petition, apparently the "prohibitionists" won the battle, for the general assembly at the same meeting took this action.¹²

"Whereas it is apprehended the distilling of spirituous liquors from grain will occasion a scarcity of bread in this State,"

it is resolved,

"That no person or persons whatsoever within this State shall distill any spirituous liquor of any kind from wheat, rye or indian corn, at any time before the rising of this Assembly in May next, excepting such grain as is already so far in the works as to render the same unfit for bread...."

The penalty for violation was set at four times the value of "such grain so distilled." This act was extended by the general assembly in October, 1777 for another year; and in October, 1778 for an additional year.¹³

No further action on the original measure seems to have been taken either in October, 1779 or later.

In August, 1777 a loophole in the prohibitory act of December, 1776 was closed up. It was "justly apprehended that the distilling of brandy from cyder will occasion a scarcity of that drink, so comfortable and

¹¹ A. R. W., V, Dec. 285.

¹² S. R. I, 104-105.

¹³ S. R. I, 416; II, 134.

useful in this State, and in a great measure deprive the inhabitants, especially the poorer sort, of the benefit and use of cyder." Hence, the distilling of brandy was absolutely enjoined with a possible penalty of fourfold the value of the cider used.¹⁴

The prohibitory legislation in cold fact did not produce a "drought" in Connecticut. What it signified in reality was the taking over of the distilleries by the State, and the use of one or more of them to produce liquor, chiefly rum, for the Connecticut militia and Continental troops. That was what happened, for example, to the distillery of Josuinos Erkelens, Mary Alsop, and Nathaniel Shaler.¹⁵ In July, 1778 Erkelens was given an export permit to take two hogsheads of spirits and other things to Albany "to exchange for grain to carry on the distillery of Geneva."¹⁶ At later dates quantities of molasses held in the state¹⁷ were ordered made into rum for use of the troops.¹⁸ An interesting entry under the heading "Geneva Distillery" casts some light upon operation of a distillery for the State.¹⁹

¹⁴ S. R. I, 366.

¹⁵ C. R. V, 227. The distillery was taken over by the State in October, 1777 for the purpose of "Distilling Geneva for Public Use." The State neglected to pay the owners for its use according to a petition of Mary Alsop in October, 1783 for just payment.

¹⁶ C. R. II, 98.

¹⁷ Probably the molasses was seized by Connecticut's active privateers.

¹⁸ C. R. II, 167 (probably at a Norwich distillery in December 1780); III, 448 (ten hogsheads to be distilled at Erkelens' distillery; the same amount at Norwich--all in June 1781).

¹⁹ A. R. W. XXIV, Doc. 229.

Ginn Distillery		Dr.			
1778	To 39 Bushels Ry @ 10/	E	19	0	0
May	To Carting Do from Cheshire		3	0	0
	To Expence of Purchasing &c.				
	paid Maj Bradley		3	1	0
				25	17 0
	13 Tierces Brot of Eben Whitman		7	16	0
	80 Bushel Rye Bot of Levi				
	Churchell @ 15		60	0	0
	40 Bushels D ^o San ^l Smith		30	0	0
				157	16 0
Sept. 26	338 Bushel Rye of Capt. Smith @ 15/		253	10	0
[1778]	To Expences & Time in Buying		10	0	0
				263	10 0
Oct. 20th	To 240 Bushels D B ^{ot} of				
[1778]	Mess ^{rs} Bort and Cole @ 15/		180	0	0
	To paid D ^o for purchasing D ^o		4	10	0
				E 631	13 0

3. Glass

An important product cut off by the war was glass, formerly imported from England. In October, 1779 Elijah Hubbard, Isaac Moseley, William Little, Jr., and Picket Latimer asked for encouragement in erecting a glass factory and carrying on the manufacture. The general assembly granted them the exclusive right during its pleasure.²⁰

The enterprise apparently was rather transitory as another group of petitioners asked for exclusive privileges in January, 1783. William Pitkin, Samuel Bishop, and Elisha Pitkin won a generous grant: a twenty-five years' monopoly for making glass and ten years' freedom from taxation.²¹

Although one cannot judge accurately as to the amount of glass made during the Revolution, it seems safe to assume that the output was very small.

²⁰ Arch., Industry, II, Docs. 168-169. Also in S. R. II, 428-429.

²¹ Ibid., Docs. 179-180. Also in S. R. V, 57.

4. Salt as a necessary article of commerce. They presented an act for 500 1/2

One of the most serious problems created by the outbreak of war and the increasingly effective British blockade was the shortage of the most vital necessity, salt. In peacetime, Connecticut imported a substantial proportion of the salt used in the Colony. Hence, the shortage very quickly became critical. On October 2, 1776 the Council of Safety took action: "Whereas the great cry and want of the necessary article of salt threatens to disturb the publick peace and safety of the State," It was voted to dispatch, at public expense, a suitable number of ships under the direction of Captain John Deshon of New London to procure salt.²² This action, however, afforded only temporary relief. The fundamental solution, as Connecticut's leaders soon realized, lay in increased production at home.

To provide an incentive to production, the legislature established a bounty system in May, 1776. One hundred pounds was offered to the first person, or persons, to erect salt works and to manufacture five hundred bushels of salt. Rewards of eighty, sixty, and forty pounds were stipulated for the second, third, and fourth persons, respectively. The deadline was October 1, 1777.²³ On the basis of the location of most of the salt works, one could assume that it was made chiefly from sea water.

There was some response, although it was inadequate. Captain Joseph Trowbridge, Thomas Trowbridge, David Trowbridge, Rutherford Trowbridge, and William Sherman, all of New Haven, petitioned the general assembly

²² C. R. XV, 529.

²³ C. R. XV, 290-291.

for the one hundred pounds bounty. They presented an account for 502 1/2 bushels of salt made at their plant from August, 1776 to March 10, 1777. Their case apparently was bona fide, because the legislature voted payment of the bounty.²⁴

To spur lagging production, the general assembly in October, 1776 voted a bounty of one shilling per bushel of salt produced before November 1, 1777.²⁵ At the November 19 special session the legislators dissented to a proposed increase in bounty of one shilling per bushel;²⁶ but, in December, they reversed their opinion by establishing the bounty at two shillings per bushel, effective for two years beginning January 1, 1777.²⁷ This schedule seems to have remained in force despite further attempts to increase the bounty.²⁸

Meanwhile, at the November session, town officials were authorized by the legislature to issue warrants and seize the stores of "any engrosser or monopoliser" of salt, and distribute it at the standard price to those needy people who applied.²⁹ Thus a combination of incentives and threats was employed by the State in an effort to solve

²⁴ A. R. W., VII, Docs. 363, 364, 367. The second five hundred pounds were made by three Branford men who completed the task in August, 1777 and were voted the £80 bounty in May, 1778. S. R. II, 54.

²⁵ S. R. I, 10.

²⁶ A. R. W., VII, Doc. 366.

²⁷ S. R. I, 103.

²⁸ The upper house passed a bill for an additional six shillings per bushel bounty in May 1777, but the lower house negatived it twice. A. R. W., VII, Doc. 362a.

²⁹ S. R. I, 65.

the salt shortage. ³⁰ A ship from France.

Despite these official actions, the scarcity of salt continued to plague the people of the State. In May, 1777 the general assembly passed a resolution calling upon the Governor and his Council to devise an equitable rule for distribution of the salt imported at the government's expense.³⁰ That spring the Council authorized Captain Jabes Perkins to dispose of 300 bushels of state salt by selling one-half bushel or less to each family in need.³¹

As far as practicable, salt was imported from every possible source. Permission was given to export embargoed articles if the ship would return with salt. For example, John McClave was allowed to transport specified quantities of flax, rye flour, and Indian corn on the schooner George to Massachusetts in order to buy salt there to bring back home.³² In similar fashion, Massachusetts shippers were permitted to bring in salt and take out embargoed items.³³

In November, 1777 the Council of Safety gave Governor Trumbull virtual carte blanche to permit out-of-staters who brought in salt and other necessities to take away such produce of Connecticut as he deemed wise.³⁴ In March, 1778, Nathaniel Shaw as State agent, was directed to

³⁰ S. R. I, 250.

³¹ S. R. I, 203. Later the minimum was increased to one bushel. S. R. I, 217.

³² S. R. I, 350. See S. R. I, 350, 352 for other examples.

³³ S. R. I, 351. Seth Mayo of Kentucket in exchange for his salt could purchase 300 bushels of rye and corn and transport the same to Kentucket.

³⁴ S. R. I, 455.

buy of Captain Michel of the ship Lyon, recently arrived from France, 750 bushels of salt for State use.³⁵

Another aspect of the problem involved the investment required in equipping a plant for making salt. Jonathan Osborne and Jonathan Brown of New Haven presented an interesting request before the general assembly in October, 1776. They related how they had spent considerable money in procuring a suitable site for salt works and buying large pans, etc. But, they were in constant danger of losing everything by enemy action. Therefore, they asked that in case of such loss they should be guaranteed indemnification by the State. The legislature answered with a decisive negative.³⁶

In the manufacturing process for salt, large pans were needed, but they were difficult to obtain. Hence the Council advised the Salisbury furnace overseers to fill all orders for salt pans as rapidly as possible.³⁷

No further general legislation upon the salt problem was enacted, and instead the matter passed largely into the hands of the Governor and Council from 1776 on. In September, 1779 they noted that the scarcity of salt remained equally as great as it had been two years earlier. Moreover, they considered that the recent embargo act had

³⁵ S. R. I, 574.

³⁶ A. R. W., VII, Doc. 354. This policy seems to have been followed consistently as other New Haven and Branford petitioners were likewise disappointed. A. R. W., VII, Doc. 353.

³⁷ S. R. I, 322, 324. Apparently the pans were not always well made. Colonel John Chester and others of Wethersfield paid £320 18s. for pans which were found to be useless. They asked and received an order for reimbursement in full for purchase and transportation costs. S. R. I, 570.

vitiating the effect of the act of October, 1777 which had allowed shipments of produce for the express purpose of purchasing salt. Therefore, the Council voted to permit any person to ship his produce outside the State in return for salt provided he filed the required bond, obtained a certificate from the town authority, and later submitted vouchers covering the transaction.³⁸ Unfortunately, this generous action was widely abused, so that the Council revoked it on February 14, 1780.³⁹

For the last two or three years of the war the records reveal frequent mention of salt, but no major legislation. In April, 1780 Congress called for 1011 pounds of salt.⁴⁰ Again and again, the towns were asked for salt to use in preserving the meat for the army; or the state salt was distributed among specified towns.⁴¹ Directions were given for packing meats in salt, buying it locally or in nearby states, and many other details.⁴² One may assume from the constant attention given to the problem that the shortage of salt harassed the people of the state throughout the Revolution.

³⁸ S. R. II, 397-398.

³⁹ S. R. II, 504.

⁴⁰ S. R. II, 521, ftn.

⁴¹ S. R. III, 183, 231, 260, 281, 522.

⁴² S. R. III, 183, 222, 231, 248, 273, 280f., 285f., 315, 346ff, 350, 354, 385, 441, 461, 479, 502, 522, 524, 544f., 550f., 553f., 576.

5. Paper

Paper-making continued through the Revolution as a small but highly significant industry. If anything, the market for good paper increased during the war years as there was need for printing many copies of emergency legislative acts and proclamations and for other governmental business.

The paper mills active before the War continued to serve throughout the emergency. Ebenezer Watson and Austin Ledyard at East Hartford kept very busy supplying the paper for the Connecticut Courant (8000 copies weekly) as well as most of the writing paper used in Connecticut, and part of that for the Continental Army.⁴³

This mill had been erected in 1775 by Watson and Ledyard especially to assure ample paper for The Courant. Prior to that, Watson could not obtain enough paper.

"The utter impossibility of obtaining a Supply of Paper for the Connecticut Courant, obliges the Printer to discontinue the Publication of it, till he can be furnished with that Article from the Mill erecting in this Place, which he can with pleasure assure his Customers, will not exceed Two Weeks."⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the new paper mill did not solve the problem entirely, although it alleviated it. Again and again the Courant's editor advertised for rags. The Courant normally consisted of a four-page weekly issue. Late in November, 1777 the editor noted that "the difficulty of procuring Rags has sundry times of late reduced the Connecticut Courant to a half

⁴³ Bishop, I, 205; Lyman H. Weeks, History of Paper-Manufacturing in the United States (New York, 1916), pp. 89-90.

⁴⁴ C. C., December 11, 1776. The next issue actually appeared on January 15, 1776.

sheet.⁴⁵ Therefore, three pence per pound, instead of two pence, was offered and the diligence of the ladies in collecting rags was earnestly besought.⁴⁵ Despite this plea, more than a few issues of The Courant

were issued either reduced in size or on very poor paper, or both.⁴⁶

On January 27, 1778 the paper mill of Watson and Ledyard burned to the ground along with a large stock of rags, paper, and other items.⁴⁶ The widows of the founders, Hannah Watson and Sarah Ledyard, immediately petitioned the general assembly, which happened to be in session then, for a substantial loan, as they claimed losses of £5000. They emphasized the important contribution made by the mill to the community, state, and Continental Army. Permission was granted them to set up a lottery for not over £1500.⁴⁷ Since the Courant continued publication throughout the War, and since no other adequate source of supply existed in the State, one may safely conclude that the Watson-Ledyard mill was quickly rebuilt and resumed full operations.⁴⁸

The mill at Norwich continued full blast through the War. It, too, served the war effort in various ways. For example, the edition of The Connecticut Gazette which contained the account of the engagements at Lexington and Concord was printed on paper from this mill. In 1776 Christopher Leffingwell's son-in-law, Thomas Hubbard, became associated with him in operation of the mill.⁴⁹

⁴⁵C. C., November 4, 1777.

⁴⁶The fire may have been an act of arson, rather than an accident. Joseph O. Goodwin, East Hartford (Hartford, 1879), p. 158.

⁴⁷Arch., Industry, 1708-1789, II, Docs. 159-161. Also, S. R. I, 503.

⁴⁸See pp. 82-83.

⁴⁹Weeks, p. 37.

Several other mills were started in the revolutionary period. One was erected at Westville near New Haven in 1776 by David Bance.

Undoubtedly the proprietors found a ready demand in the busy town of New Haven, for a few years later another mill was built at the base of West Rock in New Haven.⁵⁰

The paper shortage was reflected in Ezra Stiles' complaint that he could not even find a blank notebook until after a search of several months. He was forced, moreover, to do his writing on very coarse paper, and to curtail the amount of the writing.⁵¹ To a man of such literary proclivities, this was a marked hardship.

By and large, it appears that paper production in Connecticut during the War was carried on probably by only four mills which turned out barely enough paper for the essential needs of the press and the State, and very inadequate amounts for private needs.

⁵⁰ John W. Barker and Lemuel S. Ponderson, History and Antiquities of New Haven, Connecticut (New Haven, 1870), p. 68. Weeks, p. 90.

⁵¹ Ezra Stiles, Diary, 1770-1790, vol. II, preface.

6. Iron, Steel, and Cannon ⁵⁰

The Salisbury iron district offered very promising possibilities for development as the leading arms manufacturing center of Connecticut. How well these possibilities would be realized depended largely upon the energy with which the task was tackled.

At the outbreak of the War the Salisbury furnace was owned by Richard Smith, a merchant of Boston, who had acquired the property in 1768 from Charles Caldwell of Hartford and George Caldwell of Salisbury. Smith also had taken over interests in the iron works at Colebrook where "refined" iron, or steel, was produced. The tools for boring cannon, among other things, were manufactured at Colebrook. At the opening of hostilities, Smith returned to England upon business and left his Connecticut properties in charge of Jacob Ogden, who directly supervised, however, only the Colebrook works.⁵²

During the first few months of the conflict, Connecticut relied upon certain temporary expedients to build up her cannon and arms supply. In first place, the daring seizure of Ticonderoga and Crown Point in May, 1775 made available some cannon and other lesser arms.⁵³ In second place, in May, 1775, some sixty-six small cannon were obtained upon loan from the New York merchants, Isaac Sears and Thomas Ivers.⁵⁴ In November, 1775 and March, 1776 the Governor and Council of Connecticut sought further loans of cannon from New York, which fact represented very clearly

⁵² Louis F. Middlebrook, Salisbury Connecticut Cannon (Salem, Massachusetts, 1935), pp. 12-13. The Colebrook works burned on August 30, 1781. Ibid., p. 13.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 3-5. In April, 1776, Commodore Hopkins landed at New London with eighty-one cannon and accessories, captured at New Providence. Ibid., p. 5. C. R. XV, 110, 127.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 110 fn.

an early failure to grasp the fundamentals of the situation.⁵⁵

Connecticut had no business borrowing cannon from New York, but instead should have been considering ways and means of producing cannon for its neighbors and itself.

Fortunately, the Connecticut leaders did recognize the true nature of the situation early in 1776, and they then quickly took steps to reorganize the Salisbury works for war production. The Governor and Council were informed on January 9, 1776 that the Salisbury Furnace was "in good repair and capable of being improved to great advantage for the public, by manufacturing iron, casting cannon, cannon ball &c." Colonel Jedediah Elderkin of Windham was appointed a one-man committee to repair to the area for a thorough examination to be followed by specific recommendations for resuming production.⁵⁶ On January 29 Elderkin reported back to the Council. The nature of his report must have been favorable to the project, for the Council on February 2 stated that no other method could be found to obtain cannon for New Haven, Stonington, Groton, and other coastal towns except to use Smith's furnace, and that there was a "probability of success." Elderkin was appointed to return to Salisbury to get things started.⁵⁷

The next few months were filled with the tasks involved in organizing the Salisbury works for production. Governor Trumbull, himself, loaned Elderkin £100 to use for necessary preliminary expenses.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ C. R. XV, 176, 248.

⁵⁶ C. R. XV, 224.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 234.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 236.

From Massachusetts Lemuel Bryant, a cannon founder, was hired; and other experts, mostly from the Salisbury area, were secured. On March 18 the Council formally appointed Colonel Joshua Porter as overseer of the furnace with ample powers to prosecute active production of cannon and related items.⁵⁹ The costs of cannon production were high. Large appropriations for Porter recurred with monotonous regularity throughout the year 1776. For example, in April, £500, and in May, £800, was voted for Porter's use.⁶⁰

As far as New York was concerned, the shoe was soon on the other foot. In July, 1776 John Jay applied to Connecticut for a loan of twenty cannon from Salisbury, and adequate shot for them. The Council graciously granted the request.⁶¹ The making of shot also took much time of the Salisbury workers. For example, on June 20, 1776 the Council ordered that six tons of nine-pound shot be cast, and also two and one-half tons of one and one-half pound shot.⁶²

The project at Salisbury involved many persons and a considerable establishment. Besides the blast furnace, there was a "molding house," a "boring mill," a barn, a "bridge house," and a "guard house." Charcoal had to be brought in large quantities from such neighboring towns as Cornwall, Sharon, Canaan, and Sheffield (Mass.). The ore came from the nearby mines, as did the limestone. Some sixty men, or so, usually worked at the establishment, and in addition several score more

⁵⁹ C. R. XV, 249.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 258, 329.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 490.

⁶² C. R. XV, 456.

cut and dragged wood or served in the transportation of supplies inward and of finished products outward. Poor roads, hilly country, and long hard winters provided serious obstacles to high production. Occasionally, the furnaces were completely stopped for part of the winter,⁶³ due to such factors as impassable roads and failure to receive wood from nearby localities. Governor Trumbull and his Council maintained general control of the project throughout the war. Trumbull considered the project so vital that a special express-rider, William Wheeler, was kept in almost constant service on the Lebanon-Salisbury route.⁶⁴

The first important act of the general assembly dealing with the cannon foundry did not come until the December, 1776 session. Previously, the legislature (apparently) had been content to let the Governor and Council set the policies and procedures, and Porter handle the direct management. The Salisbury cannon up to that time had been used for protection of Connecticut coastal towns, for loans to New York, and for arming several ships.⁶⁵ Now, however, a new and greater need had arisen--a request by the Continental Congress for cannon to be sent to the northern forts and to Continental ships. The Salisbury foundry was asked, therefore, to make a much enlarged contribution--one to the Continental cause as a whole.⁶⁶ In place of a single manager for the

⁶³ Middlebreck, Salisbury Connecticut Cannon, pp. 17-21.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁵ C. R. IV, 526, an example.

⁶⁶ Some cannon already had been made available to the Continental forces. Governor Trumbull reported to Washington in July, 1776 that there had been cast at Salisbury fourteen six-pounders, eighteen nine-pounders, and eight twelve-pounders, all of which would be available to Washington if he needed them. Trumbull to Washington, July 17, 1776, A. T. P., XXIX, Dec. 302.

foundry, a committee composed of Joshua Porter, Benjamin Henshaw, and William Whiting was set up to oversee the works, and to take care of incidental necessities such as rum and salt for the workers. Wide discretionary powers were assigned to the Governor and Council in handling all problems which might arise between sessions.⁶⁷ The significance of these and the related resolves lay not so much in the exact particulars which were of a piece with the earlier pattern, but in the clear and expressed realization that cannon production must be greatly increased to meet Continental as well as state-wide demands.

Production of cannon and of small arms reached fairly impressive proportions due to the redoubled efforts made. The general assembly's special committee of October, 1776 had recommended that every effort be made to keep the furnace going through the winter under Porter's direction, but they rejected the idea of building a new furnace.⁶⁸ In January, 1777, the Council voted to supply General Schuyler with thirty-nine cannon in sizes ranging from four-pounders to eighteen-pounders, and with shot for them.⁶⁹ In April four small cannon were ordered sent to the town of Greenwich.⁷⁰ In the same month Jedediah Elderkin was asked to "make all due enquiry" at Boston and elsewhere concerning the newest and best designs for cannon, and for boring and other steps in the process of manufacture.⁷¹

⁶⁷ S. R. I, 130-132.

⁶⁸ A. R. W., VII, Docs. 376, 377.

⁶⁹ S. R. I, 159.

⁷⁰ S. R. I, 216.

⁷¹ S. R. I, 204-206.

Although the drafting of men for military service in the Revolution was not at all strict as compared to that in the World Wars of the twentieth century, it did catch a sizeable number of men including some of those at the iron works. In May, 1777 Henshaw and Whiting pointed out to the legislature that some of the foundry workers at Salisbury and Cornwall already had been drafted, and the others had become very uneasy over the prospect of drafting, or fines. Therefore, the men thought "it reasonable they should be exempted therefrom so long as they are engaged in the Business aforesaid, conceiving that their respective Services will conduce more to forward the warlike operations for their State in that capacity than in any other...." Therefore, the managers asked for exemption of forty men from service. The legislature showed a cooperative spirit, and even raised the number to be exempted from forty to fifty.⁷²

This action met the need fairly adequately as the total working force at Salisbury seems to have been composed of the following:

The managers and clerk	3
Draftsmen of patterns and turners	3
Founder firemen and molders	10
Borers of cannon	2
Dressers of Cannon	2
Clay spanker	1
Gutterman	1
Fillers	2
Bankmen	1
Ore burner	1
Ore pounder	1
Ore wheeler	1
Carpenter	1
Colliers and ore diggers	30
Total	59 ⁷³

⁷² A. R. W., VII, Dec. 38.

⁷³ A. R. W., VII, Dec. 389.

SALISBURY FURNACE,
(In the State of Connecticut)

Wanted for said Furnace a great Number of Workmen for several Branches of Business, especially for cutting Wood and making tools. The best Wages and Pay may be expected; and those that engage here their Country as well as they can any where, and may be encouraged that while they are engaged in this Service they will be excused from all other Service. Those that enter the Service with a View of cutting Wood, are desired to bring their Ax and Blanket. All Gentlemen Farmers & others, are earnestly invited to lend their aid as speedily as possible, as Cannon for the Continent to be made at said Furnace are much wanted.

April 21, 1779

Benjamin Henshaw,
W^m Whiting Managers.⁷⁴

In June, 1779 Whiting again raised the issue with a petition that all of his necessary workers be exempted from military duty. The lower house negatived the petition, but the upper house voted to exempt up to fifty men. To settle the difference in opinion Messrs. Elmore and Phelps of the lower house conferred with Eliphalet Dyer of the upper house as a joint committee. The lower house reconsidered and finally decided to exempt forty men which compromise was accepted.⁷⁵ Then, as more recently, the draft exemption problem aroused strong controversy.

Apparently Salisbury did not always fill the cannon requirements of the State, for Governor Trumbull in January, 1778 wrote Governor Cooke of Rhode Island about the possibility of obtaining cannon from that

⁷⁴ Gazette, April 11, May 30, 1777.

⁷⁵ A. R. W., XIV, Doc. 284. In April, 1780 the Council upon Whiting's request ordered the exemption of Whiting, one clerk, one carpenter, one founder, two firemen, one blacksmith, one ore-burner, two fillers together with such others employed there who were not inhabitants of Connecticut. S. R. II, 542. Jacob Ogden likewise twice petitioned the Council for exemption of his key workers at Colebrook. The first time, on August 20, 1779, the Council exempted ten men; the second time, on April 23, 1780, Ogden and eleven of his workers. In each case Ogden was granted exactly what he sought. S. R. II, 387, 542.

state.⁷⁶ Cooke, in answer to the query, stated that the Providence furnace owners already had orders for one hundred and twenty cannon, but they would be glad to serve Connecticut if enough workers could be secured.⁷⁷ There is no evidence available, however, to indicate any actual shipment of cannon from Rhode Island to Connecticut, but it is obvious that Rhode Island cannon production loomed large for the Continental cause.⁷⁸

Salisbury cannon seem to have ranked at the top both in quality and price. Soon after Congress had requested the loan of cannon from Connecticut, Roger Sherman wrote from Philadelphia in March, 1777 that many leaders there were very surprised and displeased at the prices quoted by Salisbury managers--£70 to £80 per ton--since the price in Pennsylvania was only £40 per ton. Sherman defended the Salisbury prices as being caused by heavy expenses in rebuilding,⁷⁹ the scarcity of wood, the high price of charcoal,⁸⁰ and the long distances which it was carted. Moreover, Salisbury cannon were much lighter in weight so that the total

⁷⁶ Trumbull to Cooke, January 31, 1776, "Correspondence of Governor Nicholas Cooke," Proceedings of American Antiquarian Society, XXXVI, 302.

⁷⁷ Cooke to Trumbull, February 1, 1776, ibid., pp. 302-303.

⁷⁸ Earlier, in January 1776, Walter Stewart, the Commissary, journeyed to Rhode Island for cannon, shot, and shells, and commented that the Salisbury furnace was not in blast. Walter Stewart to General Schuyler, January 23, 1776. Walter Stewart, Force Transcripts, 268:10.

⁷⁹ At least £1450 was spent in fitting up the furnace. Bishop, I, 511.

⁸⁰ Charcoal was used entirely in the smelting of iron in the Salisbury district until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Keith and Sharpe, passim.

cost was not so much higher as most people thought.⁸¹

In January, 1777 the able commissary, Walter Stewart, reported to a committee of Congress that Salisbury was demanding £70 per ton for nine and eighteen-pounders, and £60 per ton for smaller ones. The committee decided that the prices were exorbitant in comparison with those farther South and refused to negotiate on that basis.⁸²

In the same year, however, frequent transactions were satisfactorily completed. An example of a specific transaction between the Salisbury authorities and the Continent is given below:

Bill to United States for Cannon Delivered to Schuyler's Army
in 1777

8	18-pound cannon	£1001
4	9-pound cannon	300
10	6-pound cannon	480
10	3-pound cannon	200
30	18-pound shot	2:8:2
120	9-pound shot	5:15:7
300	6-pound shot	14:9:5
		<u>£2003:13:2</u>

From Pay Table Office, December 23, 1787.⁸³

The prices listed here range from £20 apiece for a three-pounder to approximately £125 apiece for an eighteen-pounder.

The Salisbury Furnace continued to pose problems of finance, production, supplies, and legal litigation throughout the remainder of

⁸¹ Roger Sherman to Governor Trumbull, March 21, 1777, W. C. C. II, 307. In a later letter, Sherman declared: "Those [cannon] made at Salisbury are allowed to be of the best kind."

⁸² Walter Stewart to Samuel Adams, January 28, 1777. Walter Stewart, Force Transcripts, 268:14. Stewart to General Schuyler, March 8, 1777, ibid., 268:39.

⁸³ A. R. W., XXXII, Dec. 231.

the War. Most of the time some kind of legislative committee was in existence dealing with one or several of these problems.⁸⁴

At times, dissatisfaction broke out over the management and the failure to produce more. In the winter of 1778 the furnace apparently closed down temporarily, for it was not in blast in May, 1778.⁸⁵ The accounts got jumbled up at times, too. Porter found it difficult to collect just compensation for his work and expenses, both in 1778 and 1780; but he finally got paid after a considerable delay.⁸⁶

The problem of procuring adequate supplies for the personnel of the establishment at Salisbury constantly occupied the attention of the managers. This concern is clearly reflected in a newspaper notice of October, 1777. Henshaw and Whiting gave notice that, with legislative sanction, they would exchange pig iron for the following items: coarse woolen cloth, yarn stockings, tow cloth, shoes, leather, cheese, pork, beef, butter, wheat, rye, corn, oats, hay, and six or eight good teams with drivers. At the same time, those who had engaged to do work for the Furnace and had walked out, were warned to return or face prosecution.⁸⁷

The output of cannon, shot, swivels, and iron continued at a fairly high rate through most of the war period. In 1778 improvements in equipment were completed which enabled the foundry to cast some thirty-two pounders for the Continental Navy and New York State.⁸⁸

⁸⁴A. R. W., XIII, Docs. 106-117.

⁸⁵Ibid., Dec. 113.

⁸⁶In 1778 Porter asked for £521 15sh. for 330 day's work. A. R. W., XIII, Dec. 114. A. R. W., IX, Docs. 294-297.

⁸⁷C. C., October 7, 1777.

⁸⁸Bishop, I, 512. Malcolm D. Rudd, "Lakeville-in the American Switzerland," Connecticut Magazine, VIII (1903), 355.

During most of the period from 1779 to the end of the conflict, William Whiting acted as manager of the Salisbury establishment on a semi-private status in regard to operation. He secured periodically a renewal of his lease, paid the State a modest rent, and generally satisfied state officials with his direction.⁸⁹ For several years the assembly displayed much uncertainty as to the wisdom of confiscating the property despite what seemed like adequate proof that Richard Smith, the owner, had gone over to the enemy. In February, 1781 the legislature resolved to give public notice for interested parties to appear in May and show cause why the entire estate should not be confiscated as the property of an enemy.⁹⁰ More or less by accident, the property never was confiscated or sold. Smith returned to America in 1782, appeared before the council of safety in November, and asked permission to bring in his effects and reside once more in Connecticut upon his property. The Council referred the problem to the next general assembly which decided that Smith was sincere in his professions and restored him to full rights as a citizen and property-holder.⁹¹

Salisbury furnace business continued to come up for discussion and action before the Council and legislature to the end of the war and beyond. Whiting on March 27, 1782 represented to the Council that he had entered into a contract to supply the Commissary-General of military

⁸⁹ C. R. II, 248, 351, 513; III, 348-349, 460; IV, 102, 111-112. In November, 1780 the Assembly refused to renew Whiting's lease and ordered a public sale of the property. This sale did not work out properly, however. A. R. W., XX, Docs. 302, 309.

⁹⁰ A. R. W., XX, Doc. 310. S. R. III, 325.

⁹¹ S. R. IV, 337-338; V, 37.

stores with a large amount of shot and shells so that he wished to retain control of the Salisbury property, which right was once again granted.⁹²

The Salisbury district contributed many hundreds of cannon and huge amounts of shot and shells to the American cause in the period 1776-1783.⁹³ Without these cannon, especially, it is doubtful that the war could have been prosecuted to a successful conclusion. The constant surveillance of Governor Trumbull and his council of safety, and the great exertions of William Whiting, Benjamin Henshaw, and Joshua Porter, as managers at different times, contributed greatly to the success of the project. The Continental Army in the North, the Connecticut militia and coastal towns,⁹⁴ and many Continental and State privateersmen employed Salisbury cannon and ammunition with telling effect.

Although the Salisbury furnaces provided the locale for the manufacturing of most of the iron and iron products of revolutionary Connecticut, a few other production centers, nearby and distant, should not be overlooked.

The Colebrook forge where, as already indicated, steel was made under Jacob Ogden's direction produced in close cooperation with the Salisbury works. For example, in June, 1781 Ralph Pomeroy, a deputy quartermaster, received a Pay Table Committee order on William Whiting for him to provide from Salisbury furnace(s) two tons of pig iron for

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S. R. IV, 111-112, 272-273.

⁹³

The total of cannon actually ran into the thousands bracket. Middlebrook, Maritime Connecticut, I, 2.

⁹⁴

Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, Milford, New Haven, and New London were among the towns receiving cannon from Salisbury.

use at Colebrook.⁹⁵

Captain Samuel Forbes, of Canaan and Lakeville, the pioneer iron-master of northwestern Connecticut, had set up the first furnace in the Colony for producing cast iron at Lakeville in 1762. This property eventually came into the hands of Richard Smith, so that it merged into the Salisbury history.

Other iron forges scattered about the State actively worked for the patriot cause, but under the handicap of using iron ore inferior to Salisbury's. In 1781 a forge was erected on Mt. Riga by Abner and Peter Woodin,⁹⁶ but its great period of productivity came after the war's end. At East Hampton, Abijah Hall made iron work for ships, and won renown for his trip hammers.⁹⁷ In New Milford Capt. L. Ruggles, Lemuel Warner, and Orange Warner, ran a forge in New Milford,⁹⁸ and John Phelps, one in Stafford.⁹⁹ Another important establishment was that of Elijah Backus at Yantic where he made cannon and anchors.¹⁰⁰ When one considers that the only good deposits of iron ore in Connecticut were

⁹⁵ A. R. W., XVII, Dec. 529. At the end of the war Smith recovered the Colebrook property, and his agent Jared Lane sold it to Joseph and Elisha Duell. Irving E. Manchester, The History of Colebrook (Winsted, Connecticut, 1938), p. 39.

⁹⁶ W. H. C. Pyncheon, "Iron Mining in Connecticut," Connecticut Magazine (May, 1899), V, 279.

⁹⁷ Carl F. Price, Yankee Township (East Hampton, Connecticut, 1941), p. 65.

⁹⁸ A. R. W., XIV, Dec. 288. Phelps on January 6, 1779 asked exemption for his laborers, but the lower house rejected the request.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Dec. 17. Phelps made grape shot for the fort at Groton. S. R. III, 113.

¹⁰⁰ Leonard W. Bacon, "Norwich, Connecticut," Connecticut Magazine (October, 1896), IV, 177.

located in the northwest corner, the accomplishment of the forges in other sections of the State deserve much praise.

It is a delightful sight to see the progress of the work of the forges and employed to make sure the work is done in order, and the work is done from the start and finish. There is a great deal of work done in the forges and the work is done in order and the work is done in order.

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7. Powder was sold at nine shillings per hundredweight, for good

The war crisis meant that for the first time Connecticut was forced to make a deliberate effort to manufacture powder. A system of bounties was employed to encourage the manufacture of powder and arms since the shortage from the start was critical. Never before in Connecticut's history had so much powder or so many guns been needed, and so quickly.

More than fine phrases of exhortation were needed to produce powder. In May, 1776 a bounty of ten pounds for every fifty pounds of salt petre manufactured and of five pounds for every one hundred pounds of sulphur manufactured was established for a period of one year.¹⁰¹ In December, 1776 the general assembly passed an "act for encouraging the Manufacture of Salt Petre and Gun Powder." Under its provisions one received a bounty of ten pounds for each one hundred pounds of salt petre or nitre made in the Colony between June 1, 1776 and January 1, 1777. Inspectors should be chosen to ensure the grade of the products, and every town without works must set them up immediately.¹⁰² As a special incentive, a bounty of thirty pounds awaited the first and second persons building a powder mill and manufacturing five hundred pounds of good powder.¹⁰³

In May, 1776 the legislature came forward with an elaborate bill consolidating and improving the earlier acts on the subject. A bounty of four shillings per pound applied to all salt petre made before June 1, 1776, and two shillings, before January 1, 1777, if passed by inspectors. A basic price of three shillings per pound was established

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C. R. IV, 18.

¹⁰²

C. R. IV, 190-191.

¹⁰³

C. R. IV, 191-192.

for salt petre, and of nine dollars per hundredweight, for good powder.¹⁰⁴ These bounties constituted a real strain upon the slender financial resources of the State, but the crisis would brook no delay.

Yet despite the encouragement offered for making powder, there seem to have been very few such establishments set up in the State. In December, 1775 William and George Pitkin of East Hartford were granted liberty to erect a powder mill on a stream about three miles from the River. At the same session a license was granted to Jedidiah Elderkin and Nathaniel Wales of Windham for the same purpose. The following winter on March 19 Adam Babcock of New Haven appeared before the Governor and Council in behalf of Jeremiah Atwater, Isaac Doolittle, David Austin, and himself to ask for a permit for a powder-mill. He obtained full satisfaction in the matter.¹⁰⁵ Another mill was established at Glastenbury in 1776.¹⁰⁶ The geographical dispersion of the new powder mills into the different sections of the state became fairly complete with the authorization by the legislature for mills at Stratford and Salisbury in May, 1776.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ C. R. XV, 287-289. Selectmen served as the inspectors. The two houses of the legislature experienced great difficulty in reaching an agreement upon this bill. Differing votes in the two bodies necessitated joint committee action to solve the problem. Connecticut Miscellaneous Papers, 1637-1783.

¹⁰⁵ C. R. XV, 204-205, 213-214, 251.

¹⁰⁶ Arthur P. Van Gelder and Hugo Schlatter, History of the Explosives Industry in America (New York, 1927), p. 52. The mill blew up on August 23, 1777, and six persons were killed. Before that time large amounts of saltpetre were delivered to the mill by nearby towns. For example, Saybrook sent 1943 lb. 8 oz. on February 20, 1777. A. R. W., ser. 2, XXXIX, 79. The mill must have been rebuilt because it delivered 50,974 pounds of powder to various towns in 1781. A. R. W., XXXII, Doc. 354.

¹⁰⁷ C. R. XV, 350-351, 357. Robert Fairchild, Stephen Bourghs, and Abraham Brinsmade were the Stratford operators; David Griffin, John Williams and John Kniekerbooker, those at Salisbury. The Upper House of the legislature showed much hesitancy about the Salisbury petition, but finally assented. Connecticut Miscellaneous Papers, 1637-1783.

The basic legislative acts concerning this phase of powder production for the war period were largely completed by the fall of 1776 when acts providing for inspectors of powder, and for a system of bonding of producers, rounded out the program.¹⁰⁸

Another phase of powder production also demanded much attention-- the matter of procuring salt petre, an essential in the powder-making process. The fundamental act covering this problem was that of May, 1775 which established a bounty of ten pounds for every fifty pounds of salt petre made in the State within one year, and a bounty of five pounds for every one hundred pounds of sulphur, another essential ingredient.¹⁰⁹ Other acts to encourage production followed along through 1776, and they closely paralleled those for increasing powder production since the two were so inseparably bound together.¹¹⁰

Although there never was a fully adequate supply of powder available in Connecticut to meet all wartime demands, the rate of production was stepped up greatly. By May 22, 1776 Jedidiah Elderkin and Nathaniel Wales announced to the general assembly that they had constructed their powder mill and made over 1000 pounds of good powder. Therefore, they desired the bounty of £50, which was voted to them.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ S. R. I, 8-9, 133. A bond of £2000 was required after the Upper House had reduced the requirement from £4000. A. R. W., V, Doc. 345.

¹⁰⁹ C. R. XV, 18. Sulphur was acquired during the war from the West Indies, especially Dominica. Middlebrook, II, 203.

¹¹⁰ C. R. XV, 190, 199, 258, 287, 350. Some of the salt petre and sulphur, was sent into Dutchess County, New York for use in making powder. C. R. XV, 101.

¹¹¹ C. R. XV, 372.

At the local town level, a real effort seems to have been made to help the cause, mostly through encouragement of saltpetre production. For example, Farmington officials gave encouragement to John Treadwell and Martin Bull, and much was produced by them.¹¹² In Windham County, the production of saltpetre increased very greatly, probably due partly to the location of the powder mill at Windham. As a sample of the prevailing industriousness, the towns in the County provided the mill with 42,666 pounds of saltpetre in three months ending in February, 1777.¹¹³ Among those who brought large amounts to the mill were Abel Clark and Nathan Frink, of Pomfret, and John Brown of Windham.¹¹⁴

Several interesting cases involving saltpetre manufacture came before the general assembly. In one of these, John Scovel and Rosewell Woodward of Guilford, in November, 1776, petitioned to be released from militia service and freed from any penalty for failure to report upon an earlier occasion upon the grounds that they were engaged in making saltpetre. Both houses answered with a resounding negative.¹¹⁵

In another case, the general assembly was confronted with a knotty personal problem. Caleb Atwater of Wallingford preferred a lengthy statement to the legislature in which he pointed out that he had spent many months in building a plant and launching the production of saltpetre. Already he had completed 2400 pounds, and he had on hand materials from which he could turn out 1000 pounds more. He had received orders,

¹¹² Henry Allen Castle, History of Plainville (Plainville, 1918), II, 195.

¹¹³ Bayles, p. 78. On December 13, 1777 the mill blew up with the loss of one life. Larned, II, 179.

¹¹⁴ Larned, II, 151.

¹¹⁵ Connecticut Miscellaneous Papers, 1637-1783. A. R. W., V, Doc. 329b.

meanwhile, to march with the Tenth Regiment, and he was willing to do so. Yet, he felt that the manufacture of saltpetre was more essential to the public welfare since he was capable of producing 250 pounds weekly.

Furthermore, he did go to New York in March while his works remained idle. He, therefore, asked to be relieved from service, which request was heartily concurred in by both houses.¹¹⁶ This action evidenced an intent on the part of the legislature to consider each case upon its individual merits, rather than to adopt an inflexible policy in such matters.

Although the French Alliance involved, among its many helpful ramifications, an increase in the amount of powder available from outside sources, it did not mean that Connecticut could curtail or stop its production. The increasing scope of the military campaigns necessitated the utmost efforts to keep production of powder high. More than once General Washington wrote to Governor Trumbull about the imperative need for additional powder from Connecticut.¹¹⁷

The output of powder did not always measure up to acceptable standards of quality. For instance, Governor Greene of Rhode Island wrote to General Sullivan in August, 1778 that a large quantity of the powder from Connecticut was unfit for use.¹¹⁸ The trouble with poor powder apparently continued, for complaints came in from other sources. Peter Colt, one of the commissaries in the State, lodged with Governor Trumbull a vigorous complaint against the New Haven powder works. He had purchased 3300 pounds

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Also, in briefer form, in S. R. I, 45.

¹¹⁷ Washington to Trumbull, July 3, 1780, M.H.S.C., L, 183.

¹¹⁸ Collections of Rhode Island Historical Society, VI, 207, 208.

of gun powder, and sent 2900 to Boston for use of privateers. The entire lot had been condemned as useless so that Colt was enraged and sought quick rectification of the situation.¹¹⁹ Governor Trumbull immediately referred the complaint to his Council, and the group appointed James Wadsworth and Andrew Ward to repair to the powder mill for a careful investigation.¹²⁰ No further complaints were brought to the Council's attention so that one may assume that an improvement was made. It is certain that the New Haven mill produced large amounts of powder throughout the War. In December, 1780, Ezra Stiles reported that he had been informed by Isaac Doolittle that the powder mill in New Haven had produced 80,000 pounds since its inception in 1776.¹²¹

From this brief survey it is evident that the powder industry, a war-born enterprise in Connecticut, despite occasional inferiority in product and general inadequacy in amount of production, did make a substantial contribution to the Connecticut and the Continental war effort.

¹¹⁹ Peter Colt to Trumbull, December 16, 1779, M.H.S.C., LXII, 461.

¹²⁰ S. R. II, 446-447.

¹²¹ Ezra Stiles Diary, 1770-1790, III.

8. Guns

In the matter of making guns for the Connecticut militia and the Connecticut regiments in the Continental Army, the State was better prepared than for the manufacture of powder or paper. Although gun-making had not been carried on as a large-scale colonial industry, as already has been seen,¹²² the large number of active gunsmiths in the State formed a splendid nucleus for the much-needed expansion of the war period. Revolutionary gun-making did not involve any large factories, but rather an acceleration of effort by individual craftsmen. Many who had worked part-time, now devoted full time to the work; and some, in addition, directed the efforts of apprentices.

At the outbreak of the war, the general attitude was that each man should provide his own arms. To every man who provided himself with a gun "well fixed with a good bayonet and cartouch box" a bounty of ten shillings was to be paid. If sufficient arms could not be obtained that way, additional arms would be impressed.¹²³ This act of April, 1775 obviously was intended only as a temporary expedient, for the leaders of the State realized that any serious fighting would require a large increase in the number of guns needed.

The real frontal attack upon the problem was launched by the general assembly at its regular meeting the next month. In a comprehensive act "for encouraging the Manufacturing Fire-Arms and Military Stores" a bounty of five shillings per gun and of one shilling six pence per gunlock was established as an incentive to gunsmiths.¹²⁴ In October, the act was

¹²² See p. 93.

¹²³ C. R. XIV, 418.

¹²⁴ C. R. XV, 17-18.

extended for six months.¹²⁵

Gun-making took much time, but the need was pressing. Hence, additional inducement was offered by raising the bounty from five to seven shillings six pence per gun in May, 1776, which standard was continued henceforth.¹²⁶ A standard procedure for testing guns also was established in November, 1776 in order to safeguard the lives of soldiers and to save the State money.¹²⁷

In spite of the precautions taken to assure good guns, many poor guns apparently were produced. On May, 1777 the gravity of the situation precipitated legislative action.

Whereas it is represented to this Assembly that several persons, who have been employed to make fire-arms for this State for the immediate security and defence of the country and to be made use of in actual service against the enemy, have through unskillfulness or neglect made and put off and imposed on this State poor deficient arms, totally unfit for service, whereby the lives of many of our soldiery who were furnished with them have been greatly exposed and the whole country endangered: And whereas a fraud and breach of trust of this kind is attended with great aggravation and productive of the most fatal mischiefs to the public....

The general assembly, therefore, resolved to appoint Colonel Samuel Talcott, Colonel John Chester, and Major Roger Newberry to investigate the situation thoroughly and to report all frauds to the next session of the legislature.¹²⁸

There were a few gunsmiths who turned out a large quantity of guns.

¹²⁵C. R. XV, 127.

¹²⁶C. R. XV, 317-318, 323. S. R. I, 244.

¹²⁷S. R. I, 72-73, 245, 377.

¹²⁸S. R. I, 246.

Among these was Ezekiah Huntington of Windham who manufactured and repaired guns at a shop in Willimantic from 1775 to the end of the war. In a petition to the general assembly in May, 1783, he reported a total output of three hundred and forty guns, and a bounty received upon only sixty of the guns. He asked for proper compensation for the remainder, which the legislature tardily granted in the following October.¹²⁹

It is probable that Huntington ranked first in total production among Connecticut gunsmiths.

Another very active producer was Uriah Hanks of Mansfield who specialized upon gunlocks. In the period from June 10, 1776 to June 18, 1777 he manufactured eighty-seven "double Bridle gunlocks" for the State for which he asked and received £17 8sh.¹³⁰ In April, 1778 he filed and received a claim for £3 for fifteen gunlocks.¹³¹ In Goshen, three gunsmiths were noted especially for their craftsmanship--John Doud, Ebeneser Norton, and Medad Hills. Doud and Norton formed a partnership, and divided the job into two parts. In one room Doud made the gunlocks and barrels, while in the other room, Norton stacked them. Hills had a government contract, and he received most of the guns from the local gunsmiths.¹³² At Stratford Daniel McEwen, a locksmith by trade, undertook gun making and repairing. He found the proposition so profitable that he regularly paid a fine in lieu of military service.¹³³

¹²⁹S. R. V, 405, 467-468; Bayles, pp. 71, 73.

¹³⁰A. R. W., XI, Doc. 181.

¹³¹A. R. W., XI, Doc. 628.

¹³²J. R. Mayer, Medad Hills; Hibbard, pp. 370-371.

¹³³Oreutt, Stratford and Bridgeport, p. 375. On May 15, 1777 and September 30, 1777, for example, he paid £5 for failure to report for militia service.

A fairly complete list of Connecticut gunsmiths during the War¹³⁴ includes the following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Note</u>
Josiah Adkins		Gunlocks
Nathan Bailey	New London	Repair work
Elisha Barnham	Hartford	
Stephen Chandler		Guns
Ebenezer Crittenden		Guns and repair work
Jesse Curtis	Waterbury	Guns
Samuel Dewey	Hebron	Barrels and bayonets
John Doud	Goshen	Gunlocks and barrels
Thomas Fancher	Waterbury	Guns
Jonathan Goodwin	Lebanon	Guns
Captain James Green		Guns
Timothy Green ¹³⁵	East Haddam	Guns
Samuel Hall	East Haddam	Guns. Delivered 153.
Uriah Hanks	Mansfield	Gunlocks
Ezekiah Huntington	Windham	Guns
Simon Huntington		Repair work
Amos Jones	Colchester	Guns
David Lowrey [Lowery]	Westethersfield	Gunlocks
Joseph Lewis	Groton	Repair work
Daniel McKen	Stratford	Guns and repair work
Silas Merrimen		Repair work
Moses Newton	Norwich	Guns
Samuel Hoyer ¹³⁶	Goshen	Guns
Ebenezer Norton, Jr.	Goshen	Guns
Lot Osborn	Waterbury	Guns
Anasa Palmer	Windham	Guns
Jedidiah Phelps	Lebanon	Gunlocks
Silas Phelps ¹³⁷	Lebanon	Gunlocks
Joseph Riggs, Jr.	Derby	Repair work
Lt. Ard. Walton ¹³⁸	Waterbury	Guns
Edward Williams		Gunlocks

¹³⁴ Leroy De Forest Satterlee and Arcadia Gluckman, American Gun Makers, passim.

¹³⁵ Middlebrook, I, 201.

¹³⁶ Caulkins, Norwich, p. 389.

¹³⁷ A. R. W., XI, Dec. 95. Phelps claimed bounty for twenty-four gunlocks on April 23, 1777.

¹³⁸ Bishop, p. 516; Weedon, II, 793.

It can be seen, therefore, that gunsmiths were at work in a large number of towns, and that production totalled enough to comprise a large contribution to the war effort.

The first part of the report is devoted to a description of the
 experimental apparatus and the method of measurement. The second
 part contains the results of the measurements and a discussion of
 the results. The third part contains the conclusions and the
 recommendations.

9. Shipbuilding

During the war years, shipbuilding experienced a modest boom which was caused principally by the need for new ships for the State and the Continental Navies. In most cases, the privateers were simply converted merchantmen, built in pre-war days, and they did not, therefore, represent new construction.

The list of ships built in the State for the Connecticut Navy was fairly impressive, and included the following:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>PLACE BUILT</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>America</u>	brig	John Mott		
<u>Crane</u>	row galley	Jehiel Tinker	East Haddam	Refitted at N.H. 1778
<u>Defence</u> ¹³⁹	ship	Seth Harding	Essex	[1778]
<u>Fanny</u>	sloop	Whittlesey		1778
<u>New Defence</u>	row galley	Samuel Barker	Branford	1779
<u>Old Defence</u>	brig	Daniel Deshon and William Coit	Saybrook (largest) state vessel)	1778
<u>Oliver Cromwell</u>	24-gun ship (260 tons)	Seth Harding and Timothy Parker	Essex	1778
<u>Resistance</u>	brig	Samuel Chew		
<u>Schuyler</u>	schooner	David Hawley		
<u>Shark</u>	row galley	Theodore Stanton	Norwich	1778
<u>Whiting</u>	row galley	John McCleave	New Haven	1778

The Defence actually was purchased from Captain John Griggs of Greenwich, but it was a practically new ship with only one voyage.
A. R. W., I, 367; II, 82.

For the Continental Navy

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>PLACE BUILT</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Confederacy</u>	frigate	Seth Harding	below Norwich on Thames	
<u>Trumbull</u>	36-gun frigate (700 tons)		Portland ¹⁴⁰	
<u>Bourbon</u>	40-gun frigate (900 tons)		Portland	
<u>Connecticut</u>	24-gun frigate		Portland ¹⁴¹	[1778]

The river ports were particularly suited for wartime ship construction as they were considered safe from British naval attacks, unlike the Sound ports. Hence, it is not surprising to find that the chief towns engaged in building Continental and State ships were Norwich (and vicinity) on the Thames; Hartford, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Portland, Middletown, Middle Haddam (Knowles Landing), Haddam (Higgamum), East Haddam Landing, and Essex on the Connecticut River; and Derby on the Housatonic River.¹⁴² The Portland-Middletown-Wethersfield section stood out as probably the largest producer of new ships. In the summer of 1776, two ships for example, including a frigate, were built in Wethersfield and with great speed, according to Barnabas Deane.¹⁴³

The building of even a small ship was an expensive proposition.

¹⁴⁰ The Trumbull was not constructed well. See Howard V. Chapelle, History of American Sailing Ships (New York, 1935), p. 57.

¹⁴¹ C. C. S. II, 120-122. Middlebrook, Maritime Connecticut, I, 10-150, passim, and 204.

¹⁴² Middlebrook, I, 204.

¹⁴³ Barnabas Deane to Jeremiah Wadsworth, August 26, 1777; September 2, 1776; Jeremiah Wadsworth, Miscellaneous Letters, 1777-1783.

Captain Jonathan Lester, for example, was allowed £861 16sh. 6 1/2 p. for building the row-galley Shark in 1776.¹⁴⁴ On the whole wartime shipbuilding was directed toward war purposes and involved a moderate amount of construction which largely compensated for the loss of normal peacetime construction.

9. Lead and sulphur mining

Lead, for obvious reasons, was required in much larger quantities than ever before. In May, 1775 the general assembly appointed Jabez Hamlin, Matthew Talcott, and Titus Hosmer "to provide such stores of lead as they shall judge necessary for the use of this Colony." Probably, neither the legislature as a whole nor the committee members realized how difficult of achievement this task would be.

The only known good source of lead in the State, then, was the mine on the River just below Middletown to which reference already has been made.¹⁴⁵ The committee was authorized to make use of this mine and supervise the refining of the ore for which £400 was appropriated.¹⁴⁶ John Stephany, lessee of the mine, petitioned for a reasonable rent to which the legislature replied with a resolve to pay him whatever amount the value of the lead obtained exceeded the cost of production.¹⁴⁷

The mining and refining of lead was started quite rapidly. On August 21, 1775 Governor Trumbull wrote General Washington that seven or eight tons of rich ore had been raised, and the smelting works were being completed.¹⁴⁸ By the following April, Washington was calling for as much lead as possible from Middletown.¹⁴⁹ In July the price of lead

¹⁴⁵ See p. 95. Mines at New Canaan, Woodbury, and Farmington were looked over but did not prove valuable. C. R. XV, 356, 329; M.H.S.C., L, 2-3. Trumbull, History of Connecticut, II, 83. In 1779 a furnace was established at Stafford in which lead hollow ware was made, but iron goods were the more typical product there apparently. Weeden, p. 792; S. R. III, 113.

¹⁴⁶ C. R. XV, 37, 99.

¹⁴⁷ C. R. XV, 368-369.

¹⁴⁸ M.H.S.C., L, 2-3.

¹⁴⁹ W. O. W., IV, 497.

was pegged at six pence per pound.¹⁵⁰

At no time did the Middletown project produce an amount sufficient for all the demands of the State and Continent. Several times the general assembly called upon the towns to collect all possible lead: first, in June, 1776; then, in December, 1776 when penalties were stipulated for non-compliance by the following March.¹⁵¹ By December 1776, a considerable amount of lead had been collected at the Middletown furnace which the committee was ordered to have cast into bullets.¹⁵²

Early in 1778 the State's leaders decided that the Middletown lead project had failed to prove its worth despite intense and able efforts by all parties concerned. This conclusion was based upon the belief that the expenses incurred by the State had far exceeded the value of the results obtained.¹⁵³ The decision was undoubtedly a wise one, as the vein of lead ore, while rich, apparently had nearly been exhausted in any case.¹⁵⁴ Yet, the project could not be considered a failure because a significant amount of cannon balls and bullets were made from the Middletown lead.¹⁵⁵

In the latter years of the War, lead apparently was procured from

¹⁵⁰C. R. XV, 459.

¹⁵¹C. R. XV, 438; S. R. I, 124-125. Many accounts of town lead collections can be found in A. R. W., including VI, 214, 262, 298, 370, 388, 463.

¹⁵²S. R. I, 129.

¹⁵³S. R. I, 538. Titus Hosmer, who handled these financial transactions for the State reported in May, 1779 to a legislative committee disbursements to a total of £5051:4:2 3/4. A. R. W., XIV, 299.

¹⁵⁴Middlebrook, I, 201. Rice and Foye, p. 62.

¹⁵⁵Some 15,563 pounds of balls and lead were delivered to state agents through March 20, 1779. A. R. W., XIV, 298.

sources outside the State. In March, 1780, for example, Captain John Deshon was ordered by the Council to purchase two tons of lead at Boston, which he did.¹⁵⁶

Sulphur, an essential in the manufacture of gunpowder, was eagerly sought by the State. As already has been seen,¹⁵⁷ a bounty was offered from the first month of the War for its production. In December, 1776 a special committee was set up to locate sources of sulphur in the State, to organize the procedures for separating the sulphur from its ore, and to determine the economic practicability of the process.¹⁵⁸

In May, 1776 the general assembly entertained an interesting proposition from a certain Thomas Bidwell of Pennsylvania. Bidwell asked the State to provide him with twenty suitable sulphur pots, and with free use of the sulphur ore obtained from the Middletown lead mine. In addition, the State should pay him £2 10sh. for every hundredweight of sulphur made within a two-year period, ending June 1, 1778. The legislators accepted the proposal, but limited the amount to be purchased for the time being to fifty pounds.¹⁵⁹ Permission of the mine owners was secured, and Bidwell soon began operations. He presented a bill for £27 11sh. for thirty-one days of preliminary services through May 1776.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ S. R. II, 513; III, 220. A. R. W., XVII, Docs. 219-220.

¹⁵⁷ See p. 220.

¹⁵⁸ C. R. XV, 199.

¹⁵⁹ C. R. XV, 325-326. A special committee on sulphur had been set up to consider ways and means of encouraging sulphur manufacture. This committee recommended the acceptance of Bidwell's plan. A. R. W., V, Docs. 347-350.

¹⁶⁰ A. R. W., XII, Doc. 89.

This was only the beginning of what proved to be a very expensive undertaking. Bidwell's expense accounts mounted steadily upwards, but the output of sulphur was hardly noticeable. In fact, he submitted a request for additional time, beyond the two years stipulated, which was granted.¹⁶¹

The cessation of lead mining efforts voted in February, 1778, apparently, finally terminated Bidwell's activities since they were dependant upon a steady supply of ore. In any event, nothing further was heard of his project.

¹⁶¹ Connecticut Miscellaneous Papers, 1637-1783. A typical bill was Bidwell's of June 12, 1777 for 223 days of work and for miscellaneous expenses, all of which totalled £89 11sh. Payment was authorized. A. R. W., V, Docs. 354-358. In A. R. W., VII, Docs. 339-341. (May, 1777) is a petition of Bidwell declaring that he was unable to obtain adequate materials and wished to be released from his contract and paid his expenses, which was granted.

CHAPTER XV

Connecticut Privateering

Privateering¹ was employed very quickly as an American weapon against England. Relatively soon after the possibility of a long war was realized by Continental leaders, they took appropriate measures to open the seas to American privateers. While privateering seems to present-day Americans to be only legalized piracy,² then it was widely considered to be a thoroughly honorable procedure in wartime. Already, the British Government had authorized privateering actions against the Americans.

Certain strategic and economic considerations, moreover, recommended to Congress the commissioning of numerous privateers as a highly desirable expedient for Americans. The size and power of the British Navy made it almost hopeless for an American Navy to operate as a serious rival. The vast British merchant marine, however, offered a tempting target. Furthermore, scores of American craft, idled by the disruption of normal foreign and intercolonial routes, and, before long, by a growing naval blockade, were available for use as privateers. The American shipowner, forced by the choice of leaving his ships idle at the docks and earning nothing, or of having them commissioned as

¹A privateer signified a privately-owned vessel whose commander possessed letters of marque, that is, a warrant or license granted by a state empowering the holder to make reprisals at sea upon the subjects of a specified enemy power.

²Even in revolutionary days, however, public opinion in New England upon privateering was far from unanimous. More than a few public leaders decried its effects upon public and private morals. Sidney G. Morse, "The Yankee Privateersman of 1776," New England Quarterly (March, 1944), XV, 71.

privateers, was likely, if he had an adventurous spirit, to choose in favor of privateering. If the losses tended to mount too high, there was no compulsion to continue privateering. One could get into it, and out of it, as the odds shifted back and forth. Privateering, therefore, was the chief outlet available for Connecticut merchants normally involved, to an important extent, in foreign and coastal trade.

Congress took its initial action in November, 1775 when it declared explicitly that no master or commander of a vessel could cruise for prizes without a commission from Congress. Recommendations were made to the States to set up proper courts; and procedures for handling all prize cases were outlined, with right of appeal to Congress reserved.³

In March and April, 1776 more specific legislation was passed regulating the commissioning and other details relating to privateers. Blank commissions were to be sent to each State, bonds of \$5000 or \$10,000 (depending on size of ship) were required, and the division of prizes was left to the individual state to decide.⁴ In the case of Connecticut, the State took one half of the proceeds. In the other half, the owner(s), officers, and crew shared according to a prearranged plan which varied from ship to ship.

Connecticut's first official action was taken at the May, 1776 session of the Legislature when it authorized Governor Trumbull to fill

³ Journals of Congress, III, 372-373 (November 25, 1775).

⁴ Ibid., IV, 251-254 (April 3, 1776). Hundreds of privateers were commissioned directly by Congress, and hundreds more, by individual states. The privateers of Connecticut seem to have belonged in large numbers to both categories. Gardner Allen, A Naval History of the American Revolution (Boston, 1913), I, 46.

the blank commissions "for Private Ships of War and Letters of Marque and Reprisal" sent by Congress.⁵ At the same time, the general assembly gave the regular county courts jurisdiction over all cases involving captures brought into the respective county.⁶

Actually, the first recorded action in Connecticut supporting privateering had already occurred before the May, 1776 session. About a month earlier, on April 15, the Council of Safety voted to furnish four individuals of Fairfield with five hundred pounds of powder "to set forth an armed vessel against the enemies of America."⁷ This action was followed shortly by others authorizing privateers and looking to their equipment and arms.⁸

Privateering attracted immediate and strong interest, for the colonial smuggler gravitated smoothly into privateering. In general, as Trevelyan succinctly expressed it: "they now fastened eagerly upon an occupation which had an appearance of reconciling the claims of patriotic duty with the attractions of an adventurous life, and the prospect of enormous gains."⁹

The total number of Connecticut privateers in service at one time or another during the conflict is variously estimated at from less than

⁵ C. R. XV, 318.

⁶ C. R. XV, 281.

⁷ C. R. IV, 262.

⁸ C. R. XV, 268, 401, 462, 525; I, 513.

⁹ George Otto Trevelyan, The American Revolution, Part III, 345.

two hundred to nearly three hundred.¹⁰ Probably, the higher total comes closer to the actual number.

New London ranked clearly as the leading privateering port in Connecticut. In fact, only Essex County, Massachusetts, exceeded it among the American seaports.¹¹ Sir George Collier, Commodore of the British Fleet in New England waters from 1776 to 1779, referred to New London as "a famous receptacle for Privateers ... [which] was thought on that account to injure the British trade as much as any harbour in America."¹²

For New London it soon became a choice between privateering, or no shipping at all. After the British occupation of New York and Long Island, British privateers infested the Sound and soon captured or destroyed nearly all the boats belonging to New London. A serious economic depression set in which never fully lifted until the War ended.¹³

The difficulties confronting New London privateers were formidable. The configuration of the Coast and Long Island made it easy for the

¹⁰ Middlebrook states that they were "nearly three hundred privateers commissioned," I, 10. George F. Emmons, in History of the United States (Washington, 1853), listed 202 vessels and 7,754 men, and Thomas S. Collier, in Revolutionary Privateers of Connecticut (New London, 1892), pp. 27-31, listed 220 ships. The Record of Services of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution, pp. 604-607, gives, in all, only 171 privateers.

¹¹ John Avery, History of the Town of Ledyard (Norwich, Connecticut, 1901), p. 77. Martin, p. 38. Massachusetts sent out a much larger number of privateers than Connecticut. Some 1600 letters of marque, in all, were issued to Massachusetts shipowners. S. E. Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts (Boston, 1921), p. 29.

¹² Middlebrook, I, iv.

¹³ Caulkins, New London, pp. 506, 536.

British to blockade New London harbor, and, in fact, all the Connecticut coastline. On June 19, 1776 Nathaniel Shaw wrote pessimistically to a friend at Philadelphia:

Att Press^t I think their is no Chance Of Escaping the Men of Warr. Capt Kenedy also in the Ship is Still hear, they have made Several Attempts to git out, but have been drove back by the Men of Warr & am much of the mind they will not go out any more.¹⁴

Although many privateers were fitted out in New London in the first three years of the war, few had any success. The blockade remained tight and not a single prize was brought in for many months during 1776 and 1777.¹⁵

Some privateers were owned by one individual; others, by firms; and some were supported through a "shares" arrangement whereby individual risk was lessened.¹⁶ The toll of losses ran high. Such news entries as these testified to it: "Captain Bigelow, belonging to Connecticut River, is taken in the West Indies." "Captain Palmer, in a small Sloop Privateer from Stonington, is taken and carried into Newport."¹⁷ Likewise, Captain Joseph Bell in a sloop from New London bound for North Carolina was captured on that coast and taken to New York.¹⁸ Even the highly successful privateers usually were finally captured by the British. For example, the American Revenue, of New London, owned by Nathaniel Shaw

¹⁴ Rogers, p. 282.

¹⁵ Marshall, p. 106.

¹⁶ Adams, p. 49.

¹⁷ C. C., July 18, 1777. Asa Palmer's ship was the American, Middlebrook, II, 50.

¹⁸ C. C., April 21, 1780.

and Company, enjoyed fabulous success in taking some thirteen prizes in 1777 and 1778; but at last fell victim to the British frigate, Greyhound, in August, 1779.¹⁹ Another extremely successful privateer was the General Putnam, owned, too, by Nathaniel Shaw and Company, which took fourteen prizes.²⁰

Catchy advertisements were employed to lure young men into privateering.

The fortunate and swift sailing
BRIGANTINE DEANE,

DAN SCOVEL, Commander, Mounting 18 six-pounders, will sail on a Three Months Cruise, against the enemies of the United States in 10 days:--All Gentlemen Seamen and Able-bodied Landsmen, who are desirous of making their fortunes, will meet with the best encouragement, by applying immediately on board said brig, at New London.

July 20, 1781.²¹

The high hopes of the "gentlemen adventurers" were soon dashed, however, for the Deane was taken by the British the following October.²²

The Connecticut River towns sent out a large number of privateers--at least eighty-six. Wethersfield claimed twenty-eight; Middletown, sixteen; Saybrook, eleven; Hartford, ten; East Haddam, nine; Chatham, eight; Glastonbury, three; and Lyme, one. In Wethersfield the enthusiasm for privateering soared to great heights. As early as November, 1778 Barnabas Deane advocated privateering, and later, engaged actively in it.²³

¹⁹Middlebrook, II, 51-52.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 98-99. Later the ship was taken into Continental service and burned in the Penobscot expedition.

²¹C. C., August 7, 1781.

²²Middlebrook, II, 68.

²³Martin, p. 38.

Capital for privateering came from many parts of the State. Among the prominent owners of and investors in privateers may be listed: John Deshon and Nathaniel Shaw of New London; William Coit, Joseph Howland, Andrew and Ebenezer Huntington, Christopher Leffingwell, Joseph Packwood, Jabez Perkins, and Joseph Williams of Norwich; Frederick Bull, James Church, Samuel Kilbourne, Abraham Miller, Jeremiah Platt, and Jeremiah Wadsworth of Hartford; the Deane and Webb brothers, Joseph Bulkley, John Foster, Justus Riley, and John Wright of Wethersfield;²⁴ John Welles of Glastonbury; Benjamin Henshaw, Comfort Sage, and Matthew Talcott of Middletown; David Bates of Chatham; Jabez Chapman, Humphrey Lyon, and Sylvanus Tinker of East Haddam; John Blagge, Abel Buel, Pierpont Edwards, and Michael Todd of New Haven; Thomas Mumford of Groton, and Benjamin Tallmadge of Litchfield.²⁵

The British shifted their main attack to the South in 1778 which resulted in some relaxation of the blockade along the New England coast. The amount of privateering increased steadily, therefore. In 1778 there was a big upturn over previous years; and 1779 and 1780 saw the peak of privateering reached. In 1781, privateering continued at a lower but still active level, after which it tapered off until the end of the War.²⁶ Frequent notices in the newspapers of the sale of prize goods attested

²⁴ Stiles, I, 497.

²⁵ Stiles, II, passim. Hall, pp. 81-84. A number of other New London shippers were associated with Nathaniel Shaw, but the ownership was listed as "Nathaniel Shaw & Co."

²⁶ Collier, p. 20. In the summer of 1778 naval quarters in New York estimated the chances against an unarmed British ship reaching England from New York as three to one. Trevelyan, Part III, p. 346 fn.

to the considerable success of privateers in the 1778-1782 period.²⁷

The British losses from American privateers as a whole reached serious proportions and caused grave alarm. Lloyd's of London listed losses, as follows:²⁸

<u>Year</u>	<u>Merchantmen taken</u>	<u>Retaken</u>	<u>Net loss</u>	<u>American privateer losses</u>
1776	229	51	178	6
1777	331	52	279	18
1778	359	87	272	16
1779	487	106	381	31
1780	581	260	321	34
1781	587	211	376	40
1782	415	99	316	68
1783	98	13	85	3

In 1779 eighteen prizes were brought into New London; and in 1781, among others, the Hannah, taken by the Minerva. The Hannah's cargo estimated at £80,000 constituted the most valuable single prize taken by a Connecticut privateersman. Its seizure, incidentally, may have been an important factor in causing Arnold's raid upon New London.²⁹ Many privateers were destroyed by Arnold's men, but the raid failed to wipe out all such activity as the British had hoped, since at least three prizes were brought into port in November, 1781.³⁰

²⁷ These notices were particularly common in the Courant in 1779 and 1780. A typical notice may be found in the issue for July 20, 1779.

²⁸ Adapted from Middlebrook, II, 5. Middlebrook states that Lloyd's figures are far from being strictly accurate.

²⁹ Ibid., II, 163-164; Avery, p. 77. Good fortune alone had saved New London from earlier direct attack. Only unfavorable winds deterred Clinton from attacking in September, 1778 so that he sent General Green on to Bedford where about seventy privateers were burnt. William M. James, The British Navy in Adversity (London, 1926), p. 108.

³⁰ Collier, p. 25.

In the later stages of the struggle, privateering became too popular for the good of the regular Army and Navy and the State forces. Pay was low and was often greatly delayed in both services, whereas the possibility of getting rich quickly made privateering very alluring.³¹ On May 27, 1781 Lt.-Col. William Ledyard of New London wrote to Governor Trumbull that the two artillery companies under his command did not fill up because "the great number of Privateers that have been fitted out this season with the great success they have had has taken almost all the men away that would leave home from this quarter."³² Likewise, men tended to prefer privateering to the more disciplined, lower paid service in the Continental Navy.³³

Privateering played an important part, therefore, in the economic life of Revolutionary Connecticut. Its effects were confined largely to coastal and river towns. By and large, privateering did not bring sound prosperity, nor large overall profits. It brought color and excitement, occasional rich prizes, many fruitless cruises, and frequent complete loss of vessel and capture of the crew. No seaport in Connecticut grew wealthy from privateering—not even New London, the chief center. In fact, New London, in general, languished through the war.³⁴

³¹ Actually a successful cruise did not mean immediate rewards. Sometimes weeks or months passed before the courts and agents proceeded through a slow routine. When the time to pay off came, many had sold their shares; and depreciation had hit the rest. Morse, p. 82.

³² Quoted in Record of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, p. 607 from Trumbull Papers.

³³ Harold and Margaret Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power (Princeton, 1942), p. 11; Carrol Steers Alden and Allan Westcott, The United States Navy (Philadelphia, 1943), p. 12.

³⁴ Caulkins, New London, p. 536.

The vast majority of the individuals engaged probably lost money, although an occasional operator had good fortune. On the whole, privateering provided a poor substitute for normal peacetime foreign and coastal trade.³⁵ It at times retarded the Continental Navy and Army recruiting efforts, but the heavy damage it inflicted upon the British merchant marine probably hastened the end of the War. Connecticut privateersmen captured close to five hundred ships brought into Connecticut ports plus many taken to other friendly ports.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., Caulkins, Norwich, p. 406; Bolles, p. 573; Needon, p. 772; Adams, p. 51.

³⁶ Middlebrook, II, 258.

CHAPTER XVI

Local Trade

1. Introduction

The War had a severe impact upon local trade throughout Connecticut. Local markets found their accustomed channels of supplies slowed up or partly diverted, or both. Supply and demand got out of balance, with demand often outrunning supply which resulted in prices being bid up. Commissaries for the State and Continental forces scoured the countryside and bought up large amounts of supplies for the armed forces. Moreover, centers of wealth tended to draw scarce products away from their normal market. In most sections, at various times, a real labor shortage developed which curtailed production both of agricultural and of manufactured goods. As is usual in wartime, substitution of more plentiful for scarce items was common, even though the substitute was usually less satisfactory.

The effects of the wartime situation varied greatly as regarded individuals and even towns and rural sections. For some merchants the war brought great prosperity; for others it spelled depression or even ruin.¹

2. The Hartford market

Hartford affords an excellent case study in the impact of the Revolutionary War upon mercantile activity. Due to its location in the center of the State, safely removed from the likelihood of British

¹ Jeremiah Wadsworth is an example of the class which prospered greatly; Governor Trumbull, of the class which was practically ruined.

incursions, Hartford suffered less interruption of its commercial life. Its agricultural hinterland, also, did not have to fear British attacks, and remained in unusually good condition for sustained production. Moreover, the amount of traffic on the exposed shore road greatly declined, and large amounts of "cross-state" and inter-state trade were diverted to the middle route through Hartford! To all these items can be added others which quickened commercial activities. Most of the meetings of the general assembly were held there as New Haven was considered too dangerous. In addition, supply depots and a French hospital, were located there.² Yet despite an unusual number of favoring factors for commercial life, Hartford was deeply and often unfavorably affected by the War and its countless economic repercussions.

A careful study of advertisers in the Courant reveals a remarkably large "turnover" in personnel. Very few of those advertising in 1773, for example, were still advertising five years later in 1778; and fewer still in 1783, at the end of the war. Of the thirty-two Hartford merchants appearing at any time in 1773 issues, only ten advertised in 1778; and only seven of the original 1773 group, in 1783. It is noteworthy, though, that most of those who lasted to 1778, still remained active in 1783.

A comparison of two successive war years, say 1778 and 1779, again shows the great extent of the "turnover." In 1778 thirty-eight Hartford merchants appeared; in 1779, forty. But, only twenty-one appeared in both years. In other words, seventeen of the 1778 group failed to advertise in 1779, and nineteen new advertisers were enrolled. The

² Robert E. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era (New York, 1938), p. 82. During the war part of Hartford's commercial gain was made at the expense of New Haven which was closely restricted by the British. Ibid., 233.

turnover, therefore, came close to fifty per cent. If one compares, as a random sample, the issue of December 9, 1783 with that of ten years earlier, December 7, 1773, he finds that not one of the thirteen advertisers of the later issue had appeared in the earlier one.

Much can be learned from Courant files about the extent of specialization, and about the personnel of merchants in the different categories of trade.

Important Hartford Merchants Classified³

(1) Dry Goods (cloth, clothing, ribbons, rugs—and "European goods" in general)

Stephen Austin (& Co.)	Samuel Marsh
Caleb Bull	Stephen Mears
Frederick Bull	George Merrell
William Coit	William Rogers
Mrs. Collyer	William Seymour
Peter Colt	Peter Verstill
Thomas Hopkins	Jeremiah Wadsworth
William Lalay	Samuel Wesootte
Daniel Jones	John Burbridge (hatter)
Hugh Ledlie	Cotton Murray (tailor)

(2) Leather Goods (shoes, saddles, breeches, oxhides)

Stephen Austin	George Merrell
Frederick Bull	Moses Smith
Caleb and Ebenezer Moor	

(3) Drugs

Ebenezer and Hezekiah Beardsley	Hezekiah Merrell
William Jepson	Smith and Coit
Lynde [and Marble]	Solomon Smith

(4) Books

Caleb Bull	Hezekiah Merrell
Nathaniel Patten	

(5) West Indies Goods (sugar, molasses, rum, etc.)

Joseph Barrett	William Lawrence
John Broom	Selah Norton
John Caldwell	Ebenezer Platt
Jeremiah Wadsworth	

(6) East Indies (Asiatic) Goods (spices, tea, etc.)

James Bull	William Lawrence
Mrs. Collyer	John Skinner

(7) "India Goods"

Stephen Mears	Samuel Wesootte
---------------	-----------------

3

The List is confined to Hartford merchants who advertised a total of at least four or more times in a period covering all or part of two different years, or more.

(8) Liquors (wine, brandy, etc.)

Ebenezer Bernard
John Chenevard

William Ellery
Joseph Hart

(9) Hardware and Glass

Aaron Bull (glass)
George Burnham (files, locks)

Consider Burt (spinning wheels)
Josiah Gibbs

(10) Iron, Iron Goods, Steel

George Caldwell
Peter Colt (steel, 1783)
John Morgan

Elnathan Smith (nails)
Jared Stevens
William Tiley

Peter Vandervoort (iron, wholesale)

(11) Pottery, China

William Ellery

Isaac Seymour

(12) Jewelry, Clocks

E. Austin
Enos Doolittle (clocks)

Thomas Hildrup (watches)
James Tiley

(13) Guns, Powder

Josiah Blakley (powder)

Daniel Hinsdale (gunlocks)

(14) Miscellaneous

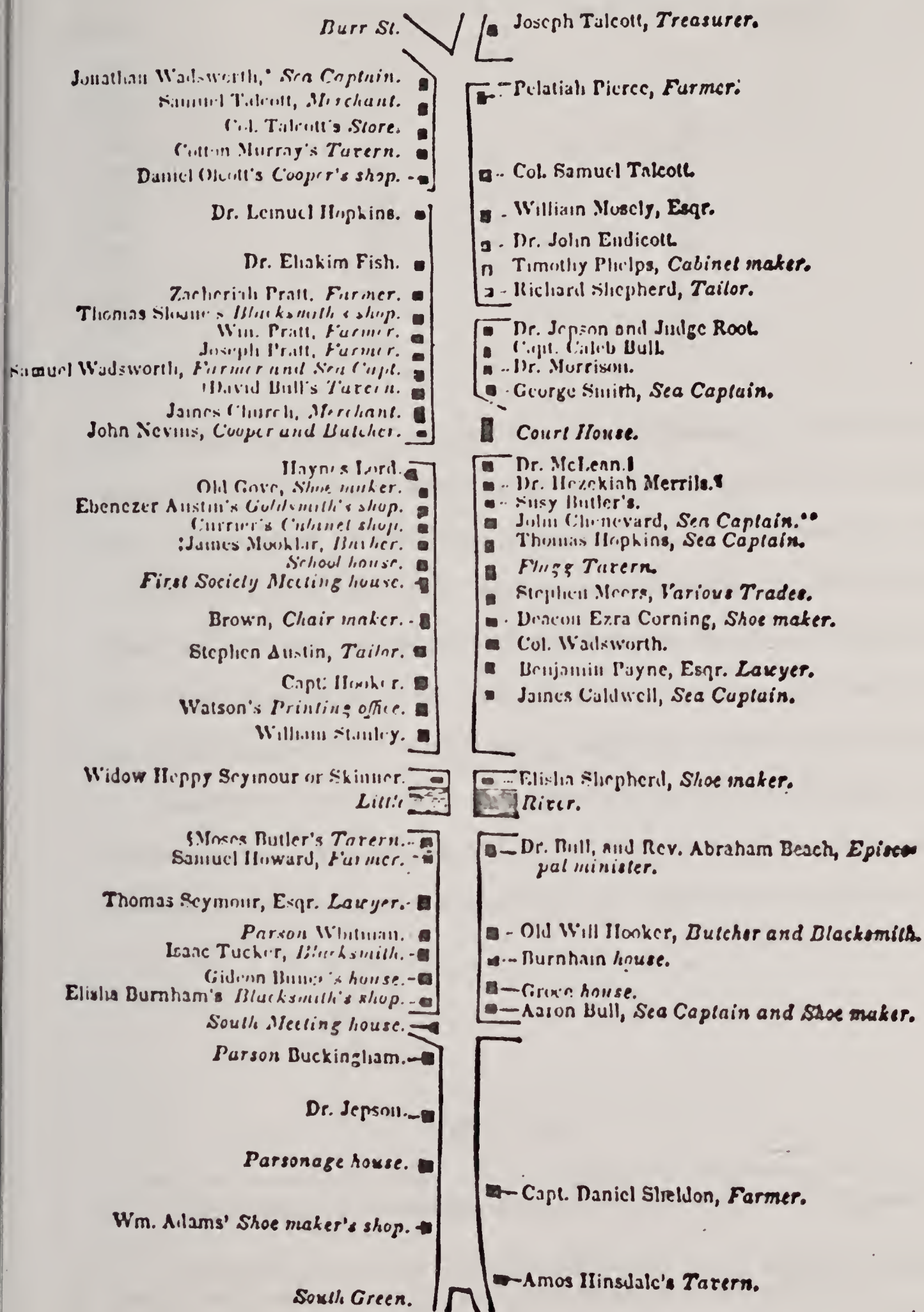
John Cable—bakery

Bevil Webster—indigo

In all, approximately one hundred and fifty-three Hartford and one hundred and sixty-five non-Hartford merchants advertised during the war period. A few of the men in the list were manufacturers primarily, such as Jacob Ogden of Colebrook, the steel maker; but the great majority were chiefly merchants of the retail type.

OLD INNS of CONNECTICUT

A PLAN OF MAIN STREET, HARTFORD, SHOWING THE BUILDINGS AND OCCUPANTS
AT THE PERIOD OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.



Number of Commercial Advertisements in the Courant

<u>Year</u>	<u>From Hartford⁴</u>	<u>From Outside Hartford</u>	<u>Total</u>
1773	32	18	50
1774	29	10	39
1775	30	13	43
1776	33	13	46
1777	18	16	34
1778	38	35	73
1779	40	28	68
1780	33	18	51
1781	51	24	75
1782	27	20	47
1783	37	26	63
Total	<u>368</u>	<u>221</u>	<u>589⁵</u>

Approximately sixty-two per cent of the advertisements in the decade were by Hartford men, a ratio which holds roughly for most of the individual years. The number of advertisers remained fairly steady with a peak of seventy-five in 1782 and a minimum of thirty-four in 1777. The low total for 1777 can be explained largely by the shortage of paper so that many issues consisted of two pages (one sheet) instead of the usual four, and advertisements were then usually entirely or partially omitted.

Relatively few Hartford merchants advertised consistently through the war period. Not one advertised in every one of the eleven years involved. The leaders in consistency and amount were as follows:

⁴ East Hartford merchants are included in the Hartford group.

⁵ Excluded from this table are want-ads, legal notices, lost-and-found, real estate, and goods for sale by the editor(s).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type of Merchandise</u>	<u>Advertisements</u>	<u>Number of Years</u>
Caleb Bull, Jr.	Clothing, books	107	10
Thomas Hilldrump	Watches, liquor, groceries	82	10
Nathaniel Patten	Books	80	8
George (and Daniel) Merrel	Leather goods and English goods	62	8
Stephen Austin	Leather goods	58	8
James Tiley	Jeweler	57	8
Thomas Hopkins	English and India goods	53	9
William Ellery	Liquor, West Indies goods, china	53	9
Enos Doolittle	Clocks	42	8

Only Caleb Bull of this group could possibly have had a standing order for advertising space in every issue of the Courant for any substantial part of the decade. As a whole, this group can be considered as among Hartford's leading merchants.

Non-Hartford merchants, representing many parts of Connecticut and of neighboring states as well, also advertized in the Courant. Among the localities which fell into this category were the following:

I. In Connecticut

Berlin	New London
Canaan	New Milford
Colebrook	Newtown
East Windsor ⁶	Norwich
Enfield ⁶	Northfield
Farmington ⁶	Rocky Hill
Glastenbury	Salisbury ⁶
Goshen	Southington
Hebron	Stafford
Killingworth	Suffield
Lebanon	Torrington
Litchfield ⁷	Wallingford
Mansfield	Waterbury
Middle Haddam	Westfield
Middletown ⁷	Wethersfield ⁷
New Britain	Windsor ⁶
New Haven	Woodbury

⁶

Five to nine advertisers.

⁷

Ten, or more, advertisers.

II. Out-of-State Group

Boston	Springfield
Great Barrington	Stockbridge
Northampton	Wilbraham
Pittsfield	Providence
South Hadley	New York
Westchester County (New York)	

3. Wethersfield, Middletown and Litchfield merchants

The contingents from Wethersfield, Middletown and Litchfield are large enough to give one a good picture of the leading merchants in these towns.

(1) Wethersfield

<u>Merchant</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Years Advertising</u>
William Beadle ⁸	Dry goods	1773-75, 1777-78, 1781
Platt Broome	Wine	1778, 1780
Leonardus Chester	Dry goods	1775-76
Barnabas Deane	Rum	1775, 1783
Thomas Denny	Tanning	1780
Ezekiel Fosdick	Wool and cotton cards	1781
Samuel Hammer	Timber	1783
Alexander Hunt	Lime juice	1780-81
Joseph May	Pins, paper, groceries	1783
Justus Riley	West Indies goods	1776
Levi Riley	Indigo	1776
James Wallace	Dry goods	1778
George Watson	European, West Indies goods	1783
Joseph Webb	West Indies goods	1774
John Wright	West Indies goods	1776, 1779

(2) Middletown

Bates and Austin	Dry goods	1782
Samuel Buell	Silversmith	1777, 1779-80
William Clay	"Russia duck"	1780
James Cornwall	Wine	1783
William Durie	French indigo	1777-78
E. Fenno	Wine, sugar, spices	1777-78
Samuel Gill	West Indies goods	1775-76

⁸ Beadle suffered staggering losses from currency depreciation, became deranged and killed his wife, four children and himself on December 11, 1782. Stiles, Wethersfield, pp. 696-697.

(2) Middletown (Cont.)

<u>Merchant</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Years Advertising</u>
Thomas Green	English, East and West Indies goods	1775-76
Wensley Hobby	Dry goods	1778-79, 1781-83
Elijah Hubbard	West Indies goods	1783
Mary Jehonet [Johommet]	Dry goods	1775-76
Joseph King	Wine	1778
James Lamb (& Son)	Dry goods	1776-77
Silas Laurens	Salt, oil	1779
Giles Margo	Nail rods	1779
Return Mergo	Copperas	1781
Jonathan Palmer	Rum, salt, breeches	1780
Joshua Plumb	Codfish	1774
John Rogers	Drums	1774-75
Ebenezer Sage	Coats, train oil	1777-78
Comfort Sage	West Indies goods	1782
Lemuel Storrs	Dry and West Indies goods	1782
George Thomson	European and Indies goods	1773
Jacob Whittamore	Teapots	1781
Chauncey Whittlesey		1778
Dr. Willis	Drugs	1773

(3) Litchfield

Abraham Bradley	Tobacco	1773
David Buell	"Camphire car"	1778
Charles Collens	Dry goods	1783
Elijah Frisbie	Dry goods, rum, pepper	1777, 1780
Ebenezer Marsh and J. Beers	Oil of vitriol	1783
Moses Seymour	Copperas	1777
Thomas Sheldon	Indigo	1778-9, 1781
Elias Shipman	Dry goods	1780
Jedidiah Strong	Mulberry plants	1777
Benjamin Tallmadge ⁹	East and West Indies goods	1783

4. Individual merchants and their problems

Most of the merchants continued throughout the war to take goods for goods—a reflection of the desperate shortage of specie. A typical advertisement from New London exemplifies this situation:

⁹ Tallmadge directed his appeal to the soldiers of the Revolution. He had a war record and still headed the Second Regiment so that he apparently hoped to attract the veteran trade. C. C., August 26, 1783.

JUST IMPORTED BY

JABEZ PERKINS

And to be sold at his Store at Norwich-landing,
 A Quantity of choice good COD-FISH, fit for any
 Gentleman's use. Also a few Barrels Liver Oil.
 N.B. Wheat, Rye, or Indian Corn will be receiv'd
 in pay for FISH.¹⁰

On November 3, 1778 William Ellery of Hartford advertised his willingness
 to exchange "choice Hispaniola molasses" for flour, wheat, rye, or Indian
 Corn.¹¹

One can reasonably expect that more than a few of the younger merchants
 left their shops to join the Army or Navy. This desire is reflected in an
 advertisement of Leonardus Chester of Wethersfield in 1776 announcing the
 selling out in wholesale or retail lots of his large stock of iron, wood,
 English, India and home goods, etc. in order that he could take an active
 part in the War. He would take wheat, rye, corn, flax, flaxseed, beef,
 pork tallow, lard, butter, cheese, and tobacco, in exchange.¹²

After the French Alliance was consummated, a trickle of French goods
 and French money appeared in Connecticut and grew in volume toward the
 end of the War. S. Austin and Co. of Hartford advertised in 1782:

AN ELEGANT ASSORTMENT of
 Chintzes and Callicoes
 Just imported in the last Vessels from France,
 and to be sold at the store of S. AUSTIN and CO.
 Hartford, May 6, 1782.

¹⁰ Gazette, January 26; February 2, 9, 1776.

¹¹ C. C., November 3, 1778.

¹² April 22, 1776.

Nathaniel Shaw carried on an enormous amount of local and intra-state trade. Among the many Connecticut merchants with whom he dealt were Samuel Olocott, Peter Colt, and Ralph Pomeroy of Hartford; Henry Billings, Samuel Broom, Howland and Coit, Andrew, Ebenezer, Jabez and Joshua Huntington, Christopher Leffingwell, John Perit, Leonard Van Buren, and Ebenezer Whiting of Norwich; John Broome and James Rice of New Haven; Samuel Burling of Middletown; Barnabas Deane of Wethersfield, Theophilus Morgan of Killingworth; John McCurdy of Lyme; Moses Bush, Thomas Johnson, and Thomas Pelton of Chatham; Phineas Stanton and Doo Newman of Stonington; John Cable and Elijah Hallester of Glastenbury; Abijah Beebe of East Haddam; Samuel Lynd of Saybrook; Sam Squier of Fairfield and Thomas Wickham of East Hampton; and Edward Hallam, Henry Deshon, and John Hulbert of New London.¹³

Shaw had a very active trade with the firm of Howland and Coit of Norwich. On January 4, 1779 the Norwich firm sent Shaw a bill for about £3000 with this request "Should be glad if you would send us One Thousand Pounds by Capt. King—should not make this request but we are so Crowded on for Money that we are almost Crazy." Later in that year Shaw's debt reached the impressive total of £13723 10sh. 10d.¹⁴

William Ellery ranked as one of the more active Hartford merchants. His account books exhibit scores of large and small sales at his store, of which a typical transaction was the following of June 2, 1781.

¹³

Nathaniel Shaw, "Letters, 1776;" also, "Accounts, 1779."

¹⁴

Ibid.

Benja[^{min}] Waters

To 1 qt. Rum to Apr. 3 N[ew] Eng ^d	1-6
To 1 qt. Jamaica D ^o	3-0
To Cash in Chang [gd States] Money	-3
To 1 qt. Rum 1 qt. Ditto	6-0
To 1 qt. N Eng ^d Rum	1-6
	<u>£ 0-12-3</u> ¹⁵

Ellery traded considerably with Peter Vandervoort, formerly of New York who moved to Hartford at the start of the War. Among the products involved in their trading in 1780-82 were Lisbon wine, raisins, mutton, salt, veal, iron bars, nail rods, and handkerchiefs.¹⁶

Ellery dealt with many persons from other parts of Connecticut, and from neighboring states as well, which seems to have been a common phenomenon among leading Hartford merchants. For example, in 1776 Ellery had transactions with Leicester Payne of Woodstock, Uriah Brigham of Coventry, William Wadsworth of East Hartford, David Sexton of Deerfield, Anthony Elsworth of Newport, and Benjamin [J]epson of Boston.¹⁷

5. Norwich and New Haven markets

The Norwich market does not appear to have been as active as that of Hartford and vicinity, for the Norwich Packet contained a much lower average of advertising than the Courant, although the overall size of the paper was about the same.¹⁸ Among the more important advertisers were Christopher Leffingwell, Eliakim Perry (leather dressing),

¹⁵ William Ellery's Account Book, p. 172.

¹⁶ Boardman Collection, VIII, 3110.

¹⁷ William Ellery's Account Book, passim.

¹⁸ Norwich's business picked up markedly after 1780. Caulkins, Norwich, pp. 391, 397, 408.

Zabdiel Rogers (East and West Indies goods), Andrew Huntington (United States lottery tickets), Ezra Huntington (maltster), Edmund Darrow (steel, tea, indigo), Jedidiah Huntington (commissary-wanted food for army), Thomas and Russell Hubbard (salt, sugar, tea), Elijah Backus (steel, nails), Dudley Woodbridge (salt), and Samuel Woodbridge (European and West Indies goods).

New Haven as the largest town settlement in the State was represented by a large mercantile element which, however, was sorely affected by the War. Like other towns on the Sound, New Haven was fairly closely blockaded; and her foreign trade especially was largely broken up. A moderate amount of coastal trade out of New Haven and other Connecticut parts did continue. For example, in the period of September 27, 1776 through July 2, 1779 ships entered inwards at New Haven from Connecticut ports as follows: from New London--thirteen; Norwalk--three; Middletown--two; and Stonington--one. In addition, forty-one ships entered from Massachusetts and Rhode Island ports.¹⁹

Valuable information as to the nature of the shipping interests of revolutionary New Haven may be gleaned from a brief study of the registry of ships at the port. The year 1779 has been taken as an example.

<u>Date of Registration</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>When Built</u>	<u>Where Built</u>	<u>Owners</u>
Jan. 11	Sloop <u>Friend- ship</u>	Leverell Hubbard, Jr.	30	1778	Killingworth	Elijah Austin, William Eliot and Archibald Austin
Feb. 8	Sloop <u>John</u>	William Davidson	36	Prize Vessel	?	Amos Morris, Isaac Hotchkiss, and John Hemingway
Feb. 15	Schooner <u>Sally</u>	Elijah Forbes	40	Prize	?	Elias Shipman, Joseph Howell, Benjamin Sanford, Russell Clark, and Elijah Forbes
Feb. 23	Sloop <u>Lord Sterling</u>	William Brintnal	35	1776	Branford	Pierrepoint Ed- wards, James Gilbert, Thomas Wooster, Josiah Burr, Michael Todd
Mar. 6	Schooner <u>Betsy</u>	Christopher Hughes	70	Prize	?	Jesse Leaven- worth, Robert Fairchild, James Gilbert, James Driscoll, and Henry Daggett
Mar. 9	Sloop <u>Fanny</u>	William Miles	30	Prize	?	Joseph Howell, Eben (?) Samuel Huggins, Timothy Atwater, William Miles
Mar. 11	Sloop <u>Goodwill</u>	Benjamin Brown	30	1772	Derlig	Benjamin Brown, Benjamin Sanford, William Helms, Gad Willis, Thaddeus [Cook]
May 29	Schooner <u>Dolly</u>	Ebenezer Barker	35	1770	Massachusetts	Pierrepoint Ed- wards, John Russill, Enoch Staples, Edmund Rogers
Sept. 14	Sloop <u>Sally</u>	Benjamin Mallery	15	1774	Glastenbury	Joseph Mallery, Enos Hemmingway, Leverett Parde, Abijah Parde

<u>Date of Registration</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>When Built</u>	<u>Where Built</u>	<u>Owners</u>
Dec. 2	Schooner <u>Friendship</u>	William Miles	45	1773	Plymouth	Joseph Howell, Joseph Trow- bridge, (Caleb [Tr--], Ebenezer Peck, William Miles ²⁰

From a study of the thirty-three ships registered at New Haven in the period of January 11, 1777-October 23, 1782 the following data has been assembled:

Total number of owners ²¹	85
Average number of owners per vessel	2.6
Ships owned entirely by one man	4
Number of owners with interests in two or more ships	15
Number of owners with interests in three or more ships:—	8

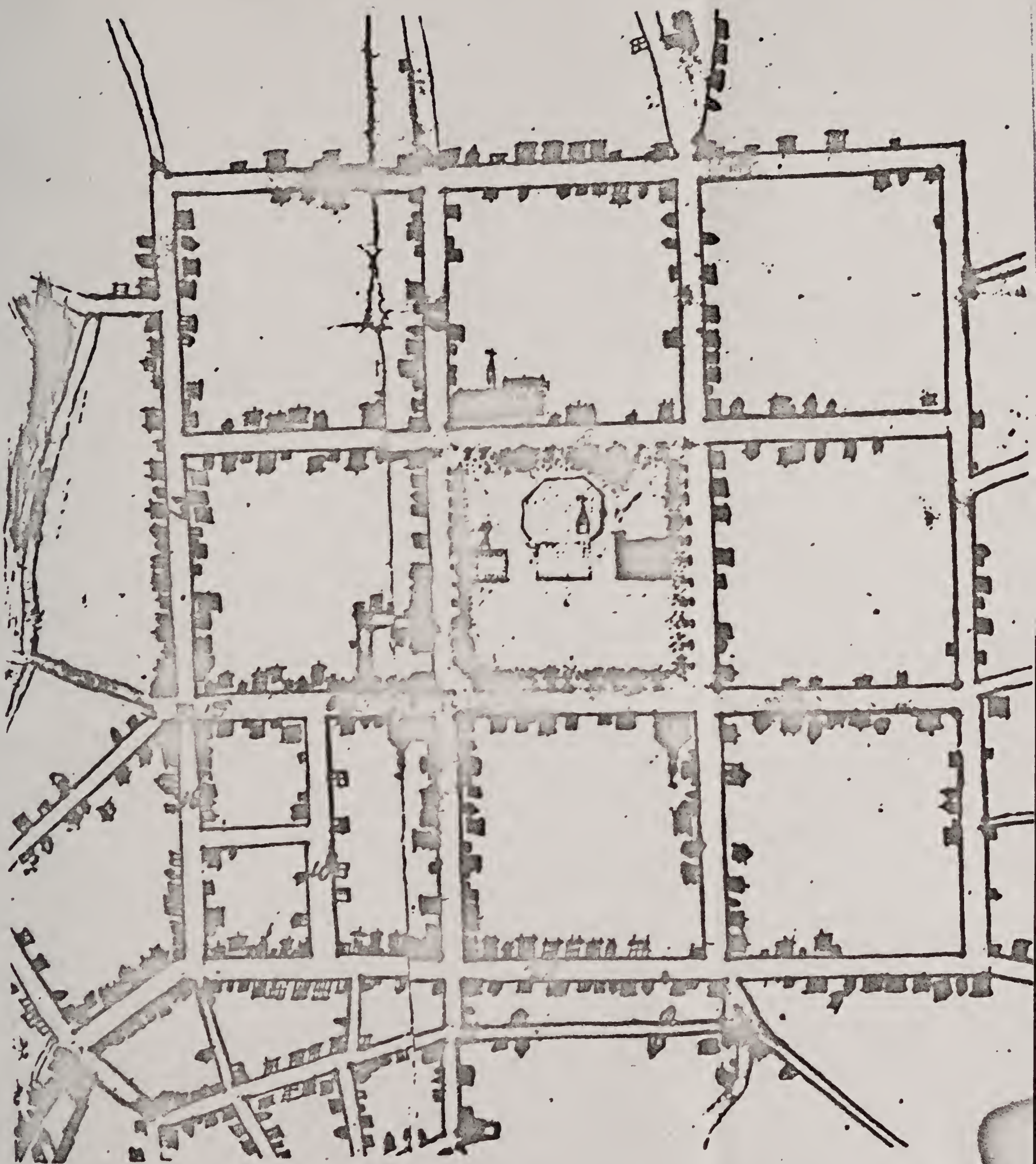
- (1) William Helms—6 (1 entirely)
- (2) Joseph Howell—5
- (3) Elias Shipman—4
- (4) Robert Fairchild—3
- (5) James Gilbert—3
- (6) Samuel Huggins—3
- (7) Benjamin Sanford—3
- (8) Ebenezer Townshend—3²²

It was the custom, apparently, to spread one's risk by taking interests or shares in several different ships. Some ships were owned by as many as five or six men, but two or three were the usual number. William Helms, Joseph Howell and Elias Shipman ranked at the top in shipping interests; but at least a dozen others had extensive investments, as the analysis

²⁰ Record of Vessels Registered at New Haven.

²¹ Plus several incomplete or illegible names.

²² Record of all Ships and Vessels Registered at New Haven.



Extra Stiles' Map of New Haven (1775)

above indicates.

The Journal carried less advertising than the Courant, but it did reveal much about the commercial life of New Haven. In the five issues of October 1777, for example, at least twelve commercial advertisements appeared.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Issues advertising in</u>
Jeremiah Atwater	train oil	two
David Austin	linseed oil	one
Jool Beach	best wool cards	one
Elias Beers	books (long list)	two
Amos Doolittle	picture of John Hancock	two
Capt. Ebenezer Gracy	cash for flaxseed	five
Daniel Olds	cash for flaxseed	three
Hawkins (of Derby)	cash for flaxseed	three
The Printer	cash for rags; books	four
Hezekiah Sabin and Michael Todd	long list of articles to be exchanged for Army clothing	three
Elias Shipman	cash or salt given for flaxseed	five
Hezekiah Tuttle	blistered steel	one

From this group Atwater, Beers, and Austin appear to have advertised frequently throughout the War. Other extensive advertisers included Henry Daggett (West India goods), Micajah Daggett (dry and West India goods), William Helms (West India goods; made hoops, staves), Joseph Howell (West India goods), Archibald and Elijah Austin (dry and West India goods), Jared Potter (of Wallingford; West India goods), and Michael Todd (dry and West India goods).

6. Conclusions

No real specialization as between retail and wholesale merchants had developed even by the end of the Revolution. Most merchants with large stocks would and did sell both at retail and wholesale. Yet, even

as late as 1795, no real wholesale market had developed in Hartford.²³

In general, the impact of the conflict upon local trade was markedly uneven, both as to towns, and individuals. A few merchants such as Nathaniel Shaw and Jeremiah Wadsworth appear to have made large profits, although local trade constituted only a small part of their trade. It was a period when unusual methods of doing business were frowned upon, and not even a war could shake many merchants out of their accustomed ways. In general, trade flourished much better in the central and northern regions of the State than along the exposed coast. The great dependence placed upon Connecticut for supplies stimulated local trade immensely and prevented any state-wide mercantile depression. This demand, in part, compensated for the curtailment of foreign trade.

CHAPTER XVII

Supplies for the State and Continental Forces

I. Organizing the supply effort

The business of procuring supplies of food and clothing for the State and Continental forces constituted an omnipresent, complicated, and harassing problem. Unclear and conflicting directives, inadequate transportation facilities, serious currency and price problems, growing demands, and uneven abilities among the commissaries—each contributed to the difficulties involved in getting enough supplies to the right place at the right time. Something has already been seen of the effort to obtain supplies of small arms, cannon, and powder¹ so that attention here will be centered upon food and clothing needs.

Much credit is due to Connecticut for a speedy start in tackling the supply problem, and for a brilliant choice in her first Commissary-General. At the ten-day special session of the general assembly beginning on April 26, 1775 Captain Joseph Trumbull, a son of the Governor, was appointed Commissary-General to oversee the provisioning of the Connecticut troops stationed in Massachusetts. At the same time, nine commissaries were chosen to assist in the supply field—Oliver Wolcott, Henry Champion, Thomas Mumford, Jedidiah Strong, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Thomas Howell, Samuel Squire, Amasa Keyes, and Hezekiah Bissell.² By and large, this was an exceptional group of

¹ See pp. 204-228.

² C. R. XIV, 430-431. Thomas Howell resigned and was replaced by Jonathan Fitch in May, 1775. Trumbull did so well in supplying Connecticut troops in the Boston area that Washington recommended him to the Continental Congress as the best choice for Commissary-General for the entire Continental Army.

which Wolcott and Wadsworth later won fame in many fields of public service, while Champion made a remarkable record in the commissary work. In general, each county was represented by at least one commissary. There is a certain humorous appropriateness in that the very first move to implement the program was an order to Trumbull that he "immediately purchase one hogshhead of New England rum...."³

Some idea of the magnitude of the supply problem may be gained from noting the items ordered in the first equipment bill, which was passed in May, 1775. It called for the following:⁴

90 officers' tents	2500 wooden bowls
500 privates' tents	6000 quart runlets
cloth for 48 officers' tents	60 drums
cloth for 460 privates' tents	120 fifes
1098 iron pots	one standard
1098 pails	per regiment
2 brass kettles per company	one medicine chest and supplies
4 frying pans per company	per regiment
70 books	one cart or wagon per company
10 reams of paper for cartridges	
2 reams of writing paper	

The daily ration per soldier was established as follows: three-quarters of a pound of pork, or one pound of beef; one pound of bread or flour with three pints of beer to each man per day. Each week's ration was to include, in addition, half a pint of rice or a pint of corn meal, six ounces of butter, and three pints of peas or beans; also "one fill of rum to each man upon fatigue per day.... Milk, molasses, candles, soap, vinegar, coffee, chocolate, sugar, tobacco, onions in their season,

³ C. R. XIV, 451.

⁴ C. R. XV, 15. By July the legislature already saw fit to order many more of most of these items, including, for example, 48 officers' and 281 privates' tents. XV, 96-97.

and vegetables⁵ at the discretion of the general and field officers.

From the standard ration one may understand which products the commissaries sought most assiduously. As a stipend for their work the commissaries were voted a commission of one and one-half per cent upon all supplies purchased.⁶

There is much evidence available that the Connecticut commissaries made valiant efforts to secure adequate supplies for the army and militia, but that shortages existed during most of the war. In May, 1776, for example, the general assembly took cognizance of "an arrearage of supplies or rations due to the officers and soldiers that went from this Colony last year in the northern army." Therefore, the commissaries were ordered to straighten out their accounts and report on the situation.⁷

In raising supplies, especially for the militia, it was frequently the custom to allot each town a fixed quota. In October, 1776 the legislature ordered for the militia 2000 tents, 2000 iron pots, 4000 wooden bowls, and 6000 canteens. Each town was to provide one tent, one pot, two wooden bowls, and three canteens for every one thousand pounds valuation on the general list, to be secured by the selectmen and kept in instant readiness.⁸ Under this plan, Hartford's share, for example,

⁵C. R. XV, 15-16. It is of interest to note that Connecticut's ration seems to have influenced that adopted for the Continental Army in August, 1775, as well as Massachusetts's ration which in turn was copied by New Hampshire. Victor L. Johnson, The Administration of the American Commissariat during the Revolutionary War (Philadelphia, 1941), pp. 11, 15, 27.

⁶C. R. XV, 40.

⁷C. R. XV, 319-320.

⁸S. R. I, 18.

with a grand list of approximately £51,000, would be fifty-one tents, fifty-one pots, one hundred and two bowls, and one hundred and fifty-three canteens. In the late fall a shortage of blankets distressed the militiamen so that each town was called upon for one blanket per five hundred pounds of list. If necessary, impressment could be resorted to in meeting the quota.⁹ These blankets were collected; and, interestingly enough, the following March they were requested by the Continental Army. Thereupon, the Council without hesitancy ordered the selectmen to turn them over to Continental officers in Connecticut for use by Connecticut soldiers.¹⁰

In supplying the militia the State created, in effect, a separate establishment which in general consisted of the selectmen of each town who were responsible for raising the town's quota. Beyond this, special state commissaries were appointed to supply the militia, as distinguished from the Continental Army's commissaries. In December, 1776 the general assembly chose for this task six men: Chauncey Whittlesey of Middletown, Jonathan Fitch of New Haven, Andrew Huntington of Norwich, David Webb of Stamford, Joshua Elderkin of Windham, and Abel Hine of New Milford, who soon found themselves quite busy.

On May 16, 1777 the Council appointed Elijah Hubbard of Middletown as "Commissary and Superintendent of the stores of supplies and refreshments to be provided by this State for the continental troops from Connecticut."¹¹ The appointment was followed up on May 24 by

⁹S. R. I, 71.

¹⁰S. R. I, 195. Earlier, in November, Joshua Elderkin had been voted £1000 by the Council to purchase clothing for the State. S. R. I, 58.

¹¹S. R. I, 314. A few days later Royal Flint was appointed assistant commissary to Hubbard. S. R. I, 318.

elaborate instructions from the Council which afford an extremely good picture of how the business of procuring and delivering supplies was accomplished, even though it did not proceed as smoothly in practice as in theory.

...You will, therefore ... purchase one good team or waggon with horses to each battalion, and employ a faithful, trusty man to each to ... take care of the same, and then load with rum, sugar, molasses and cloathing, belonging to this State.... At present there is West India rum and sugar in the hands of Capt. Ephraim Bill, salt in the hands of Capt. Jabez Perkins, New England rum and cloathing in the hands of Mr. Andrew Huntington of Norwich, cloathing, rum and sugar in the hands of Capt. Joshua Elderkin of Windham, cloathing in the hands of Mr. Chauncey Whittlesey of Middletown, Col. Jonathan Fitch of New Haven, Capt. Samuel Squire of Fairfield, Messrs. David Webb and Danl Gray of Stamford, and Mr. Abel Hine of New Milford; and transport and secure such stores in the safest places you can near the continental army.... And you will be assisted by some person appointed to ... oversee the stores in about the camp ... as also an issuing commissary to each battalion.¹² You are also empowered to impress ... teams, boats &c. ... and to employ such persons you find needful.... You have power in all cases of difficulty to take such measures ... as you ... shall judge prudent, and to purchase such articles as you find wanting.... You will be careful to provide forage and provender for your teams, cattle and horses.... Your assistant and issuing commissaries will be appointed and apply to you for their orders. You will direct the issuing commissaries what quantities of rum &c. to deliver to each soldier.... An exact account of articles delivered to each soldier to be kept and transmitted to the paymaster of each regiment respectively to be deducted out of the wages when paid....

You will keep an account of all disbursements and expences by you made, as well as monies received, and have the same in proper order for settlement at proper times.

The troops now at Perkskill are in present want of supplies; your first attention must therefore, be to their relief; and see to it that others are furnished with necessaries as they take the field.¹³

¹² The agents in camp were sometimes quite unsatisfactory. Moses Hazen on February 24, 1779, complained to Colonel Fitch about Ebenezer Clark the issuing commissary of Poor's brigade at Danbury who was distrusted by the men, and should be placed under arrest. Fitch Papers, Docs. 172-174.

¹³ S. R. I, 317-318.

As time passed, realization came that the State was obligated to help in supplying the families of officers and men in the Continental Army with the necessities of life. The prime responsibility for doing this was placed upon the respective towns which were ordered to provide provisions and clothing to the families at the prices fixed by law. The individual soldier, however, had to provide the money, up to a maximum of one-half his pay, for the necessities. If adequate supplies could not be obtained at legal prices, then impressment was possible.¹⁴

Sometimes the legal maximum prices were incorporated into a supply act as was the case in one of October, 1777 which requested each town to obtain and turn over immediately to Hubbard or Flint certain items for each town soldier in Continental service. The following rates were fixed: shoes, eight shillings six pence per pair; stockings, six shillings per pair; "shirts, hunting-frocks and overalls" according to quality with good yard wide tow cloth at two shillings nine pence per yard; and good flannel at three shillings and six pence per yard.¹⁵

2. The transportation bottle-neck

It seemed that just as the State got control of one aspect of the supply problem another would plunge out of control. Early in 1778 this proved to be the case in the matter of transportation. The moving of

¹⁴S. R. I, 410-420. At the urgent request of Congress a further act along these lines was passed in January, 1778. S. R. I, 475-476. Impressment was unsatisfactory in practice as it was very expensive. Jeremiah Wadsworth pointed this out to Governor Trumbull in a specific case in 1779 when three tons of flour were seized. They were appraised at £1314:18:2, but it cost the State £1412:1:8 to secure them, or nearly £100 for impressment legal costs. Wadsworth to Trumbull, Trumbull Papers, M.H.S.S., LXII, 385-388.

¹⁵S. R. I, 421.

private goods throughout the State had increased so much and required so many oxen as to interfere with agriculture and decrease the supply of beef for the Continental Army. Hence, a very specific act was passed providing that no private property could be transported anywhere in the State after April 1 if it required the use of more than one pair of oxen. Moreover, all public shipments taking two pairs or more of oxen had to be authorized and carefully identified. For violation, heavy penalties were provided which included confiscation of the goods and of all teams in excess of the one permitted.¹⁶

The matter of moving supplies overland was a complicated and difficult one. It was hard to recruit teamsters because the service was arduous, especially in winter, roads bad, and pay slow. Private teaming often seemed to be a much more attractive proposition. The journal of Joseph Joslin, Jr., of Killingly, gives an intimate and valuable record of the trials and tribulations of the teamster's life in 1777 and 1778.

Joslin, together with Moses Wilder, Moses Robinson, and John Robinson, all of Killingly, accepted an engagement as teamsters in the Continental service on March 5, 1777. They carted mostly hay, pork, and timber back and forth all over Connecticut, from one depot to another, and usually westward toward or to Washington's Army on the Hudson. In the winter and early spring terrible hardships were undergone as this account of a trip from Horseneck, New York to Danbury, Connecticut reveals.

(April 4, 1777) ... very Early in the morning we Put along toward the Neck & it was very Cold indeed Sir and we went to the mills and Loaded 8 barrels of flower a Peice & then we Eat some Raw pork and Bread and then we Came along by the Small Pox House

and then we Came to Norwalk to a Diabolical bad tavern. I Say
& about 22 mil[es] we have ben or more to Day and we Did lie by
the fire almost froze indeed Sir. Oh Remember Clemmons for Ever
& Ever."¹⁷

Some of the worst carting occurred during the winter and early spring
thaws. On Joslin's first long trip he started out in very cold weather
through deep snow, but three days later it thawed and then rained heavily.
The teamsters experienced "dreadful carting" through Haddam to Middletown
and all the way to Cheshire, Waterbury, and Danbury--a ten-day journey.¹⁸
For such great exertions the remuneration was quite modest. After two
months of the work, Joslin agreed to continue for six months more at
fifteen dollars per month. In November, 1777 he actually received
ninety-six dollars for six months' work.¹⁹ Joslin's vivid description
of the rigors of the work in itself largely explains the reasons for the
frequent shortage of teamsters. At times too, the sudden requests for
a large amount of supplies would have overwhelmed a much larger and
better organized teamsters' service. The food shortages in the
Continental Army, moreover, inevitably tended to be worst toward the
end of the winter and in early spring, exactly the time when the roads
were nearly impassable quagmires. At harvest times the wagons and oxen
were badly needed by the farmers so that great difficulty was experienced
then in moving army supplies.²⁰

¹⁷ Journal of Joseph Joslin, Jr., C.H.S.C., VII, 306.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 299-303.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 310, 333.

²⁰ Johnson, p. 14, cites the trouble in the 1775 harvest season.

Often the teamsters hauled very valuable loads, and some yielded to the temptation of embezzlement.²¹ Others failed to carry out their contracts despite very profitable terms.²² At times it became necessary to warn unreliable teamsters, to do their duty, as this notice in the Courant amply indicated.

All Waggoners, Teamsters, and others, belonging to the Quarter Master General's Department in this State, who have deserted or otherways absented themselves from the service, are hereby desired to repair immediately to this Post, by the 20th instant, and they shall be forgiven. Those who neglect will be advertised as deserters, and treated accordingly.

NEHEMIAH HUBBARD, D.Q.M.G.

Hartford, May 10, 1779.

Despite their many shortcomings, however, the teamsters made a vital contribution to the prosecution of the war.

3. The continental commissariat in action

The functioning of the Continental service of supply in the field constitutes a significant factor in an adequate comprehension of Connecticut's supply problems and achievements.

The need of an overall service of supply was quickly grasped by General Washington. The matter of special importance was to secure a capable man to superintend, in the field, the procurement of necessary

²¹Ibid., p. 219. Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster General, in a letter to Ralph Pomeroy, his deputy in Connecticut, dated February 2, 1781, described the exorbitant prices demanded by ox-cart teamsters who then failed to carry out their agreements. He admonished Pomeroy to set a low and reasonable price since it would set a precedent. He considered nine shillings daily enough. Connecticut Miscellany, 1740-1787.

²²Commissary Ephraim Blaine warned Quartermaster General Pickering to be very cautious in hiring teamsters for the next campaign, and related several examples of excessive pay and dishonesty. Pickering forwarded this warning to his deputies, as shown just above. Ibid., No. 343.

supplies for the Continental forces. While at Cambridge, Washington noticed that the Connecticut troops were unusually well-fed and clothed, and he looked into the matter.²³ Further study convinced him that the happy situation was caused by the exertions of Joseph Trumbull whom Washington recommended to Congress as the best choice to be the first commissary-general. The appointment of Trumbull followed, effective July 19, 1775. A year later Washington declared that: "Few armies, if any, have been better and more plentifully supplied than the Troops under Mr. Trumbull's care...."²⁴

Trumbull's difficulties grew steadily in 1776 and early 1777 as the American Army suffered frequent defeats, and retreated so often as to disrupt constantly the arrangements for supply depots and a smooth flow of supplies. Trumbull repeatedly asked for more assistance from Congress, but that body moved tardily. Finally, it enacted a new plan which Trumbull found unacceptable, and he resigned as of August 4, 1777. The rigors of the service caused a physical breakdown, and he died, a comparatively young man, in 1778.

Under the new plan, two commissary-generals were created: one, of purchases; the other, of issues. But the commissary-generals would have to deal with and be responsible for assistants appointed directly by Congress. Under the new plan the leading commissary, that of purchases, was William Buchanan, who made a poor record in his term which ended

²³ On his arrival at Cambridge, Washington "found the Connecticut troops so much better supplied than the other ... [that] he recommended him [Joseph Trumbull] to Congress for that appointment." Eliphalet Dyer and Silas Deane to Governor Trumbull, Philadelphia, July 22, 1775, A. T. P., XXVIII, 307.

²⁴ Washington to the President of Congress, June 28, 1776, W. G. W., V, 192.

March 23, 1778. Congress then reversed itself, and in essence acknowledged the correctness of Trumbull's criticisms by providing that the new commissary-general should have centralized authority and stronger backing without constant interference. Jeremiah Wadsworth assumed control as Commissary-General of Purchases on April 9, 1778 and served efficiently until December 2, 1779.

Wadsworth, unlike his predecessor Buchanan, brought a rich background of large-scale mercantile experience plus invaluable training in the Quartermaster Department. Moreover, he retained nearly all of the experienced deputy commissaries such as Peter Colt, Jacob Cuyler, and Henry Champion who had proven their worth earlier. Wadsworth, because of his Connecticut friends and interests, worked smoothly with the State leaders and agents, and undoubtedly obtained far more supplies from Connecticut than an outsider could have done in those days of hot state jealousies. The scenes of semi-starvation and horror which marked the winter at Valley Forge in 1777-78 (when Buchanan was in charge) were not repeated in the winter quarters of 1778-79. Washington noted that the troops during that winter were the best clad and healthiest since their formation.²⁵

Like his predecessors, Wadsworth found the work very exacting, and the pecuniary rewards not large. On December 2, 1779 Congress accepted his resignation and appointed in his stead Ephraim Blaine, a man of long experience and proven abilities in commissary work. He authorized Champion to continue as his deputy, purchasing in Connecticut. Blaine held the position until the Yorktown campaign reached its

²⁵ Johnson, pp. 109, 133-134, 153. W. G. W., XIV, 218ff.

successful conclusion.²⁶

By and large, the commissariat of the Continental Army did not function efficiently. The frequent critical lack of supplies amply verifies this generalization. The basic cause, however, rested upon the American people who would not vest Congress with enough centralized authority to put into operation a strong commissariat. The very fact that the commissary-general had to plead with the States for supplies instead of ordering them to produce the supplies indicates the almost fatal weakness of Congress' position. In addition, Congress reorganized the department each time a new commissary-general came into office, and this procedure kept the agents in the field confused. Engrossing seriously affected collection of supplies, as did currency depreciation, buying of goods on credit, state jealousies, transportation difficulties, and finally, graft on the part of some agents.²⁷

4. Trading at army camps

Although no system of "post exchanges" comparable to those in the modern American army camp existed in Revolutionary times, some enterprising merchants did a thriving business at and near army camps. One of these was Joshua Huntington of Norwich who ran a small store, first in the Boston area, and later, in New York and vicinity. For example, on August 17, 1775 Andrew Huntington wrote to his brother, Joshua, that he had sent thirteen gallons of good cherry rum which ought to bring one dollar per gallon.²⁸ Apparently the whole business was a

²⁶ Johnson, pp. 162, 165.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 218-220.

²⁸ General Jedidiah Huntington, Letters, I.

sort of "family" affair. Business seems to have been poorer with the Army during the New York campaign, perhaps largely due to the misfortunes and frequent retreats of the American Army. On July 27, 1776 Jedidiah Huntington wrote from New York to his brother Andrew that the latter's rum had been sold, but not too well, as the market was too fluctuating for the writer to watch it and carry on his [military] duties.²⁹

Joseph Williams of Norwich also carried on a mercantile project at the continental camp in 1775 and 1776. Williams' main source of supply was William Coit of Norwich. Williams found a small shop available in Cambridge at which he sold goods. In his first week of business, he took in about £50 in cash, which he considered good. Williams' letters to Coit indicated very nicely what items the soldiers wanted. These included coffee, chocolate, tobacco, "orange and clove water," silk handkerchiefs, checked flannel for shirts, broadcloth, ribbon, leather breeches, thread, chest locks, paper, rum, lemons, shoes, sugar, flax, cheese, wine, butter, soap, and candles. Williams later accompanied the Army to the New York Area. Trade prospered for a time, but the channels of trade were suddenly disrupted for Williams when the British appeared on October 22, 1776 and seized much of his brandy and rum. It is not surprising that on November 9 Williams announced his intention of leaving camp as soon as he could sell out what Coit had sent and settle his accounts.³⁰

5. Connecticut commissaries

The number of persons directly involved in the supply business as

²⁹ Ibid., II.

³⁰ W. G. Lane Collection.

commissaries was large. This list taken from the Archives is suggestive on this score.

List of Commissaries for the State of Connecticut

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Classification</u> ³¹
Shubael Abbe	Windham	P
Samuel Abbott	Windham	P
Ebenezer Barnard, Jr.	Hartford	S
John Bains		C
Stephen Barns		P
Daniel Bennet	Stratford	S
Itharan Bingham		C
Ezra Bronson	Waterbury	P
Handley Bushnell		P
John Caldwell	Hartford	P
John Caulfield		P
Henry Champion	Colchester	P
Israel Champion		P
Jabez Clark		S
Henry Daggett	New Haven	S
Silas Davenport	Stamford	P
Elias Dunning		P
Joshua Elderkin	Windham	C, S
Thomas Panning		P
Royal Flint		C
Samuel Fox		P
Thomas Goodman	Hartford	P
Wait Goodrich		P
Samuel Grosvenor	Pomfret	P
Abel Hine	New Milford	C, S
Moudriah Hooker	Farmington	P
Elijah House	Lebanon	P
Elijah Hubbard	Middletown	P, C, S.
Andrew Huntington	Norwich	C
Miles Johnson		P
William Little		C, S
Eliphalet Lockwood		S
Shadrack Osborn	New London	S, P
Jabez Perkins	New London	S, P
James Robinson		P

³¹ P-provisions; S-supplies; C-clothing.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Classification</u> ³¹
James Rogers		P
Moses Seymour		P
Seth Smith	New Hartford	P
John Squier, Jr.		P
Samuel Squier		S
Nathan Wales	Windham	S
James Watson		S
Chauncey Whittlesey	Middletown	S, C
Samuel Wolcott	East Windsor	p ³²

6. The coming of the French Army to New England

A new and very important chapter in Connecticut's supply efforts began in July of 1780 with the arrival of the French naval and military forces in Rhode Island. The coming of the French more than compensated for any easing of demands upon Connecticut which had resulted from the shift of the center of fighting to the South. For the remainder of the war period, Connecticut kept supplies flowing in three main directions: (1) to Washington's army on the Hudson; (2) to the large French forces in Rhode Island; and (3) to the militia units on duty within the State. This section will be concerned with the problems involved in supplying the French allies, and the interrelations with the other supply services.

The French Army, in general, experienced much less difficulty in procuring supplies than did the Continental Army, because the French had available plenty of "hard" money for their purchases.³³ The Americans

³¹ P-provisions; S-supplies; C-clothing.

³² A. R. W., XXXV, Index.

³³ An exception to this occurred at the start when M. de Cornay, French commissary, requested a loan of £20,000 upon the same conditions as under a similar loan from Pennsylvania. The Council "cheerfully" complied with this request on June 20, 1780. S. R. III, 110. Many observers commented upon the ready cash which the French possessed. Davis, "Trials of a Governor," M.H.S. Proceedings, XLVII, 140; Johnson, p. 174; Clinton Papers, VI, 182.

dealt chiefly with M. de Cornay, commissary for the French army, and M. Holker, commissary for the French naval contingent.

Samuel Huntington, as President of the Continental Congress, wrote on June 5, 1780 to Governor Trumbull that M. de Cornay was the head French commissary and that it was thought desirable that he employ the same currency for his purchases as did the Continental purchasers so as to prevent competition.³⁴ Unfortunately, this excellent suggestion was not followed. In fact, it scarcely could be expected that the French, well stocked with specie, would refrain from using as much of it as was necessary to obtain needed supplies. The impact of French buying upon American procurement was felt quickly and harshly. Ephraim Blaine, as Commissary-General, in September, 1780, reported that his department never had experienced so much difficulty in obtaining supplies as in the past six weeks because the French agents were using hard money for their purchases.³⁵ Thus, the French buying apparently had caused shortages for the Continental Army in less than a month after the French arrival at Newport.³⁶ In many cases Continental commissaries never even got a chance to bid on the goods, as Connecticut farmers preferred to profiteer by sales to French agents.³⁷

7. Large profits for Wadsworth and others

A large number of the most skilled commissaries in Connecticut

³⁴ A. T. P., XI, Doc. 240.

³⁵ Johnson, p. 174.

³⁶ The French arrived at Newport, July 10, 1780.

³⁷ Johnson, p. 143. Oliver Wolcott reported as follows: "The large Demands for Provisions for the French Fleet and Army at Newport, and the alluring Pay which they make induce great Quantity, of fine Beeff, to be sent there." Oliver Wolcott to John Laurens, December 27, 1780, Burnett, V, 502.

flocked into the French service. Within a few months after Jeremiah Wadsworth resigned as Commissary-General, he signed contracts to provide the French forces with forage and horses. He formed a partnership with John M. Carter of Newport, Rhode Island; and they carried on a very large and profitable business. The contracts were of such size that Wadsworth employed a number of agents and subcontractors including Peter Colt, Nehemiah Hubbard, Oliver Phelps, Ralph Pomeroy, David Trumbull, James Watson, and Benjamin Tallmadge.³⁸ Apparently, Carter received the supplies at Newport and Providence, and delivered them to the French.³⁹ Some conception of their transactions may be obtained from these excerpts from Wadsworth's accounts.⁴⁰

³⁸

East, p. 92; Jeremiah Wadsworth, Account Books; Beef, mutton and flour were especially important in the contracts. They asked for one-third hard money for use in purchasing and thought that would be enough if there was not competitive buying. J. Wadsworth Letter Books, 1778-1783. Hall, p. 84. The firm bought supplies directly from the Huntingtons of Norwich and James Lloyd of Fairfield County.

³⁹

Before the partnership was formed Royal Flint represented Wadsworth in Rhode Island. East, p. 89.

⁴⁰

All excerpts are from Jeremiah Wadsworth, Account Books (2).

Reed of Capt. Nehemiah Hubbard, & put on board
Capt. Peter Cattle to be deliverd at New Port, 8 Casks
of Wheat Flour ... [a description follows]

Reed of Capt. W^m Bull and put on board the
Sloop Sally James Look Master --
65 Bushells Corn
53 Bushell Rye

July 13, 1781 to Cash Paid Ralph Pomeroy
For 32 Scythes for the Army of France @ 1/ 1:12:0

July 14	to	Wm. Bull	
For 57 Bushels	Oats @ 3/8		9:19:6,
242	"	Corn " 5	60:10:0
156	"	Rye " 6	46:16:0
100	"	Buck-" 4/6	21:13:4
		wheat	<u>138:18:10</u>

Invoice of 272 Cask Flour Shipd by James Watson on Account
of Jere Wadsworth, on Board the Sloop Carefull Sylvanus
Waterman Master, for New Port, & Deliverd to John Carter
Esq^r Agent for the Army of France there.... [Description
follows] [March 13, 1781]

The firm of Wadsworth and Carter prospered greatly. Carter, a businessman
in Newport, had important mercantile and social contacts which helped.
Their profits were divided equally. In some cases, a commission as high
as five per cent was paid; and very favorable terms were arranged in the
matter of the form of payment, with bills on Paris especially desired.⁴¹

Other Connecticut merchants also signed supply contracts with the
French, but none compared in quantity with the contracts of Wadsworth
and Carter. Several in Hartford County, including Josiah Blakely, were
involved in this work.⁴²

The French apparently obtained a large amount of supplies directly

⁴¹ East, pp. 89-91. All purchasing was carried on with hard money,
or bills of exchange drawn on the French government. Ibid., p. 92.

⁴² A. T. P., XII, Docs. 126-127. East, p. 88.

from the State, although not as a gift, as the Americans demanded full pay for everything supplied the French forces.⁴³ These supply requisitions in part were funnelled through Congress. In 1780 one finds such demands made upon Connecticut by Congress for the French as follows: 1000 barrels of pork, and 1555 barrels of flour before May 1;⁴⁴ 500 or 600 barrels of flour to be placed with Thomas Mumford at New London under Holkers' complete control.⁴⁵

An interesting and picturesque chapter in French relations with Connecticut is afforded by the cantonment of the Duke de Lauzun with four hundred hussars of his legion and two companies of foot soldiers at Lebanon from November, 1780 to June, 1781. The location was selected, probably, with an eye to the reputation of the neighborhood as an excellent supply center.⁴⁶ The relations between the soldiery and the local people were very good, and no real friction developed. Lauzun and his men found food and forage cheap and plentiful, and payment was made promptly.⁴⁷

8. Interstate ramifications of the French supply problems

The problem of supplying the French definitely was an interstate

⁴³ Blanchard, p. 107.

⁴⁴ A. T. P., XI, Docs. 80, 83.

⁴⁵ A. T. P., XI, Doc. 107.

⁴⁶ The general assembly picked the towns of Windham, Lebanon, and Colchester, or any one of them, as desirable site(s), and appointed Wadsworth, David Trumbull, and Joshua Elderkin to provide quarters for the troops. S. R. I, 187.

⁴⁷

Stephen Bonsal, When the French Were Here (New York, 1945), pp. 52-53.

one which involved importantly Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut, and to a smaller extent, New Hampshire. At the inter-state conventions held at Boston in August, 1780 and at Hartford in November, 1780 some general recommendations were issued concerning French supplies. No detailed treatment was accorded to the matter because the conventions were concerned chiefly with broader problems of prices, currency, embargoes, and supplies.⁴⁸ The delegates at the Hartford meeting recommended that each state appoint commissioners to meet and work out jointly the contracts for provisioning the French Army and Navy. Meanwhile, on September 19, the Connecticut Council had appointed commissioners to confer with those of the other states upon "the most proper Mode" for furnishing the French forces with necessities.⁴⁹ The attempts at interstate cooperation on French supplies finally culminated in the abortive Providence Convention of April, 1781. Only four delegates, including Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., of Connecticut, made an appearance. Since the French Army and Navy, New Hampshire, and New York failed to send representatives, those at Providence, of necessity, adjourned in discouragement and without any positive accomplishments.⁵⁰

The French troops made their final appearance in Connecticut in the fall of 1782 when Rochambeau's army marched through the State on the return from the Yorktown campaign. The French had a series of cantonments in the State since it required considerable time to move

⁴⁸ At Providence the body recommended that measures be taken to prevent frauds being practiced in selling provisions to the French. S. R. I, 561.

⁴⁹ S. R. I, 263. The general assembly took similar action in November, 1780. S. R. I, 237.

⁵⁰ S. R. I, 574-575.

so large a force across the State. Careful preparations had been made for the French in accord with a resolve of the general assembly which directed the selectmen of the towns on the route to make all necessary arrangements for quartering and supplies.⁵¹

9. Impact of the French supply business

In conclusion, it is obvious that Connecticut supplied the French forces stationed in New England with a very large proportion of their food and forage; and that the Connecticut citizens—contractors, subcontractors, and several thousand individual farmers—involved in supplying the French profited considerably from the business. Payment was made either in specie or in bills of exchange, both of which were greatly preferred to the sadly depreciated Continental and State currency. For geographical reasons, only those portions of the State readily accessible to Rhode Island profited greatly. These areas included much of southeastern Connecticut plus several of the Thames River,⁵² Connecticut River, and Sound settlements. As has already been demonstrated, an unfortunate rivalry developed between French agents on one hand, and Continental and State agents on the other, with the French agents generally getting the better of the argument. It was, of course, obviously foolish for excessive quantities of meat to be sent to the French while Washington's forces on the Hudson languished for want of meat. Yet this occurred upon several occasions.⁵³

⁵¹ S. R. IV, 291.

⁵² Governor Trumbull wrote Washington that the French in Rhode Island had received a large part of their supplies by water from New London, a hazardous route. Trumbull to Washington, November 6, 1781, Jared Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution, III, 437.

⁵³ Johnson, p. 174.

Fortunately, this rivalry among purchasers seems to have been partially resolved in the later stages of the French stay due to the exertions of State, Continental, and French leaders aimed at preventing competitive bidding.

10. Connecticut's lagging supplies for the starving "Continental"

Perhaps the best available proof of the leading role of Connecticut as the "Provision State" lies in the frequency with which Washington called upon Governor Trumbull for help. An examination of Washington's letters reveals that he wrote Trumbull every week or two throughout most of the first five or six years of the war. Of particular significance was the great reliance Washington placed upon Trumbull's ability to obtain supplies when the Continental Army was in desperate need. This was especially noticeable in each period of winter quarters between 1777 and 1781.

The critical lack of food and clothing at Valley Forge requires no elaboration. Washington wrote Governor Trumbull on February 6, 1778 to the effect that the Army was in danger of dissolution and that no supplies were immediately available from the middle states. Hence, vital supplies had to come from the East.⁵⁴ The General followed this up the next day with a similar letter to Henry Champion.⁵⁵ As a result, Champion and Colt took \$200,000 which the Council had authorized them to spend on cattle and proceeded to purchase live beef. The cattle were procured and driven in herds by Champion and his son to the camp at Valley Forge. The first herd to arrive was eagerly dispatched in five days by

⁵⁴ M. H. S. C., L, 110-111.

⁵⁵ W. G. W., X, 425-27.

the famished soldiers.⁵⁶

Actually, the food situation in winter quarters seems to have been about as critical in the winters of 1779-80 and 1780-81. For example, on December 19, 1779 Commissary John Fitch wrote Peter Colt that General Poor's brigade at West Point had been without flour thirteen out of the last fifteen days, and it was feared that the men would desert. On January 24, 1780 Fitch reported that not a single ounce of flour had arrived at West Point for five days. Seven weeks later, in March, Fitch wrote Nehemiah Hubbard that the Army around Fishkill had no meat at all, and that Colt was the only person in a position to get any to satisfy the imperative demand.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, from headquarters at Morristown Washington wrote repeatedly to Trumbull of the critical lack of food. Washington referred to Connecticut as the chief source of meat, and emphasized the failure of the State to meet its quotas. In May he ascribed Connecticut's backwardness, in part, to "the change of Commissaries and want of Money," but he still counted on Champion to send on the beef supply. The climax came later in May when mutiny induced by lack of food (chiefly meat) broke out among two regiments of the Connecticut Line. Only strenuous efforts by officers kept the men from deserting. Washington wrote immediately to Trumbull, and also to Champion, about this unhappy event.⁵⁸ The whole episode reflected no credit upon

⁵⁶ Clark, pp. 284-285. S. R. I, 512.

⁵⁷ Fitch Papers, Docs. 97-98, 130-131, 151.

⁵⁸ Washington to Trumbull, January 8, 1780. W. G. W., XVII, 365-369. Washington to the President of Congress, March 17, 1780. W. G. W., XVIII, 121-122. Washington to Major General Robert Howe, May 5, 1780; W. G. W., XVIII, 333. Washington to Henry Champion, May 26, 1780; W. G. W., XVIII, 424; Washington to Trumbull, M.H.S.C., L, 365.

Connecticut's supply efforts for that winter and spring.

After a very brief, early summer improvement in the supply situation the shortage became critical again before August was over. On August 22, 1780 Washington reported that the Army had subsisted without meat for the last day or two and that he was counting upon Trumbull for speedy relief.⁵⁹ For once Washington's confidence in Connecticut was misplaced, for by September 3 the situation had worsened. The General stated flatly that he considered Connecticut deficient in meeting the requisitions upon it, and that no cattle had come from Champion for five weeks.⁶⁰

11. No lack of good intentions

The bad performance of 1779-80 was not caused by lack of good intentions or of preparatory supply laws. An Act of October, 1778 gave commissaries and selectmen sweeping powers for buying or impressing supplies for the Continental Army, Navy, and State militia.⁶¹ In January, 1779 the legislature pushed through "An Act to compel the furnishing of necessary supplies and assistance to the Quarter-Master General and Commissary-General of Forage of the Continental Army."⁶² As in the previous act, a warrant from the sheriff enabled commissaries to seize needed supplies from recalcitrant owners. In September, 1779 the Council, in accord with a resolve of Congress, resolved to undertake a thorough investigation into the work of the commissaries and discharge

⁵⁹W. G. W., XIX, 427-428.

⁶⁰W. G. W., XIX, 499-500.

⁶¹S. R. II, 132-133. In May, 1779 Elijah Hubbard was appointed State Clothier to reside with the Connecticut Line to handle clothing problems. At the same time Chauncey Whittlesey of Middletown was made Purchasing Clothier. S. R. II, 277.

⁶²S. R. II, 175-176.

any unnecessary ones.⁶³ The Congressional resolve undoubtedly reflected the dissatisfaction of Washington and other Army leaders with the supply situation.

There was no slackening of legislative effort in 1780 either when Captain James Watson was given charge of buying rum and hay.⁶⁴ At the same time a very elaborate act was drawn up to assure the acquisition of the supplies of beef, rum, hay, and salt asked of Connecticut by the Congressional act of February 25. In April the general assembly appointed nineteen purchasers of beef, pork, flour, etc., and gave each one a specific area in which to work. For example, Shadrack Osborn was made purchaser within the town of Woodbury in Litchfield County; and Samuel Wolcott of East Windsor, for East Hartford, Bolton, East Windsor, Enfield, Somers, Tolland, Stafford, and Willington. At the same time Henry Champion was given general superintendency over all food bought for the use of the Continental Army. In May, several comprehensive measures were enacted which gave full powers and directions to continental and state commissaries for buying or impressing supplies.⁶⁵

The winter and spring of 1780-81 saw the provisioning of Washington's forces touch a new low. It would seem that after a good five years of warfare adequate supplies could have been kept flowing smoothly to the relatively small Continental Army in the North, but such was not the case. An ambitious state supply act was passed in October, 1780 which called upon every town to furnish beef, pork, and wheat flour to the value of

⁶³ S. R. II, 395-396.

⁶⁴ S. R. II, 541.

⁶⁵ S. R. II, 521-526, 529-531, III, 15.

five pence per pound of assessed valuation. A deadline of December 15 was set for the beef, and of January 15 for the pork and flour with two-fold penalties for delinquency.⁶⁶ In November the general assembly raised the quota per town from five pence to six pence per pound of assessment.⁶⁷ On December 27 Oliver Wolcott wrote John Laurens "that this [supply] measure is carrying into the most cheerful and Vigorous execution."⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the facts did not jibe with Wolcott's optimism. Washington on January 19 wrote Trumbull in these grave terms:

"If therefore the supply of Beef Cattle demanded by the requisitions of Congress from Your State, is not regularly forwarded to the Army, I cannot consider myself as responsible for the maintenance of the Garrisons below, or the continuance of a single Regiment in the Field."⁶⁹

Matters went from bad to worse, if anything; and by April, 1781, the shortage of food was downright critical as salted provisions were exhausted. On April 10 Washington informed Trumbull that there was "no prospect of immediate relief, but from the salted provisions of Connecticut."⁷⁰ To follow up this plea, Washington, early in May, sent his second-in-command, Major-General Heath, to New England to give first-hand information upon the army's needs. He could be forceful in

⁶⁶S. R. III, 176.

⁶⁷S. R. III, 238.

⁶⁸W. C. C., V, 502.

⁶⁹W. G. W., XI, 116-117.

⁷⁰Ibid., XXI, 442-443.

his demands, for on May 10 there was not one day's meat supply at any army post along the Hudson.⁷¹

Little was done by Connecticut in April beyond an order to the towns by the Council on April 12 to deliver meat collected under the October, 1780 Act to Ralph Pomeroy, deputy Quartermaster General. General Heath, however, seems to have secured action. By good fortune, he found the legislature in session when he reached Hartford. He outlined the pressing need for beef, and added that rum was so short that "men on the severest fatigue had nothing but water to drink."⁷² To many legislators, the latter shortage may have seemed the more distressing!

The legislature did respond with several helpful acts. One thousand barrels of salt beef and pork, and twenty hogsheads of rum were ordered sent immediately and £3000 was appropriated to cover costs of the transfer.⁷³ In addition, £2000 was voted to Champion to purchase beef cattle for immediate utilization by the Army.⁷⁴ The final act provided that the towns west of the Connecticut River procure teams and transport their salted provisions to Fishkill or other designated places on the Hudson.⁷⁵ On May 15 Heath wrote happily to Washington that one hundred and sixty head of cattle were being forwarded immediately.⁷⁶

⁷¹Washington to Trumbull, May 10, 1781, M.H.S.C., L, 236-237.

⁷²M.H.S.C., Heath Papers, LIII, 196-197.

⁷³S. R. III, 381.

⁷⁴S. R. III, 383.

⁷⁵S. R. III, 392.

⁷⁶Sparks, III, 313.

Despite these excellent measures, the slowness in delivering supplies was appalling. By July, Washington reported to Trumbull that since May 12 the following meager amounts of head of cattle had been received; from Massachusetts, 230; from New Hampshire, 30; and from Connecticut, 52. The army barely was keeping alive. Connecticut was seriously deficient in rum too.⁷⁷ Fortunately, before the Army began its march to Virginia, it received plentiful supplies of food from the New England area.⁷⁸ This was due in part to the interstate meeting at Providence on June 26-27, 1781 at which definite quotas of beef were fixed for the New England States along with a schedule for deliveries.⁷⁹ To hasten the raising of Connecticut's quota, the State furnished Champion with large sums in hard money, and some of the towns cooperated excellently.⁸⁰

With the successful conclusion of the Virginia campaign, the urgency of the military and, therefore, the supply problems dwindled. There was a marked reduction of interest in all war efforts except the matter of peace negotiations. However, an army was kept in the field for most of two more years, 1782 and 1783. During this last period of "watchful waiting" supplies did not always come through from Connecticut, even though a supply organization was maintained. On May 4, 1782 Washington wrote Trumbull that the states were seriously in arrears on their quotas of supplies.⁸¹ In the fall of 1782 Jeremiah Wadsworth and John Carter

⁷⁷W. G. W., XXII, 311-312.

⁷⁸Johnson, p. 197.

⁷⁹S. R. III, 576.

⁸⁰Trumbull to Washington, July 9, 1781; M.H.S.C., L, 247.

⁸¹M.H.S.C., L, 269.

supplemented their income as supply agents for the French by undertaking work under the so-called "American Contract" to procure provisions for the Continental soldiers at West Point and nearby posts.⁸² Henry Champion and Oliver Phelps also acted as contractors for the American forces in this final phase of the war.⁸³

The last important war-time supply acts were passed in January and May, 1782 as the legislature tried to raise the quota assigned to it by Congress.⁸⁴ The pressure definitely was removed, however. In January the legislature authorized the Governor and Council to dispose of the surplus part of the state supplies on hand.⁸⁵ Before the end of the year peace was seen to be certain, and people's thoughts turned to the post-war period and its possibilities.

12. Causes of slow delivery of supplies

In view of these thorough and comprehensive acts, why did the State fail so badly in delivering its quota of supplies to the Continental Army? The main cause probably was laxness in enforcement of the laws which sprang out of the weak central government both of the State and of the United States. The towns were delinquent, in first place, since many selectmen would not put pressure upon their neighbors who often preferred hoarding to accepting depreciated paper currency. The State could exert little effective sustained pressure even though

⁸² East, pp. 93-94.

⁸³ S. R. V, 105.

⁸⁴ S. R. IV, 8-9, 171.

⁸⁵ S. R. IV, 24.

the Governor and Council did their best to spur the laggards.

Decentralization of authority then provided the basic cause of tardiness in obtaining and forwarding supplies from Connecticut.

Another important cause was slowness in paying farmers for supplies provided. In a sense it was a tribute to the patriotism of many farmers that they had taken commissary notes. These farmers, however, became restive when payment was not forthcoming.⁸⁶ On March 10, 1780 Governor Trumbull commented upon this situation: "Permit me to add to this list of illbodings and misfortunes the failures of payment of old debts, which necessarily disables the fattners of cattle from going on to furnish supplies to the army...." Even if the farmers were again willing to fatten cattle for the Army, non-payment of their contracts prevented many of them even from purchasing more lean oattle.⁸⁷ In 1781 a special act was passed to expedite payment of the sums still due many persons for provisions supplied to Jeremiah Wadsworth or his agents when he was Commissary-General.⁸⁸ Another significant cause of trouble was the failure of Congress to make its requisitions early enough. Governor Trumbull wrote a sharp letter to the President of Congress in November, 1780 relative to the congressional requisition for salted provisions. Trumbull observed tartly, "the Season for making that Supply is almost lapsed--the Pork and Beef gone to Market--that if we must make a full

⁸⁶ M.H.S.C., LXIII, 18-19. Many Connecticut farmers still had not been paid by June, 1780 for beef provided the previous year. Moreover, their contracts were for fixed amounts of money, and therefore suffered greatly from depreciation. Trumbull to the President of Congress, June 8, 1780, M.H.S.C., LXIII, 50-53.

⁸⁷ Trumbull to Washington, March 10, M.H.S.C., L, 158-159.

⁸⁸ S. R. III, 379-380.

Compliance—we shall be obliged to purchase it from the Hands of Engrossers and others ... is it impossible for Congress to make their Estimates & Requisitions in their proper Season--if it is not--I think the neglect is almost unpardonable."⁸⁹

13. Supplies for the State navy

Although the amount of supplies required for the Connecticut Navy and privateers was small in comparison with that required by the militia and by the Continental Army, the naval side of the story should not be overlooked. Mention has already been made of the fairly extensive activities of Connecticut naval craft.⁹⁰ A glance at the record of supplies received on board one ship, The Trumbull, in a brief period of about seven weeks (March 17-May 6, 1777) is illuminating in showing the large amounts of supplies required for a ship with a crew of about seventy. It included 20 barrels of beef, 10 barrels of pork, 254 gallons of rum, 71 pounds of coffee, 1988 pounds of fresh beef, 1 keg of hog's lard, 2 firkins of butter, and considerable sugar, bread, and soap.⁹¹

14. Supply service rivalries and graft

A factor which caused some trouble in the procurement of supplies was the rivalry between continental and state purchasers. For instance, in the spring of 1779 Peter Colt reported that he was constantly being

⁸⁹ Trumbull to President Samuel Huntington, November 27, 1780, A. T. P., XIII, Doc. 168.

⁹⁰ See Chap. XV.

⁹¹ Ship Trumbull. Account Book.

thwarted in his efforts to obtain flour by the activities of continental purchasers. In fact, even some of James Hillhouse's purchases for the state were seized by Continental agents and by General McDougall.⁹² Several months earlier, Edward Hallam of New London stated that Continental commissaries regularly seized flour in Connecticut from state commissaries. He wondered whether legal suit for damages could not be undertaken.⁹³

Dissatisfaction with the state supply organization led the legislature to appoint a committee to inquire into the conduct of the lower supply officials. The committee experienced great difficulty because most accounts were incomplete, so that it resorted to questioning of witnesses in its report of October, 1780.

It appears that the most capital Abuse which has prevailed in the purchasing Department is that the Assistant Purchasers of Cattle have in very many Instances and in large Proportions purchased Cattle of Speculating Jobbers that have infested the various Parts of the State, during the present War, who have been indefatigable in purchasing under various false Pretexts. All the Cattle in their Power, this has been a principal Cause of the Rise of Provisions but it does not appear these People have in any one Instance been employed by the Purchasers and those Purchasers have very often been necessitated to purchase of them.⁹⁴

Peter Colt, as a purchasing commissary, pleaded with the legislators to give the commissaries greater power to seize all engrossed goods. He described the shameful practices prevalent:

...A great Number of unprincipled men--are going thro 'every part of this State, engrossing, & buying up, on Speculation, every

⁹² Edward Hallam to Governor Trumbull, April 5, 1779, A. T. P., IX, Doc. 159.

⁹³ Ibid., January 27, 1779; A. T. P., IX, Doc. 23.

⁹⁴ A. R. W., XIX, Doc. 257.

Article that the Country affords for the Subsistence of the Army--and then sell them again to the stationed Commissary--or transport them out of the State, as best suits their Interest--as these people are always in Cash, and are under no controuls, they have the advantage of those who are employed to purchase for the Army.... These Jobbers pretend to be employed as Agents to the Commissaries or for the French fleet....⁹⁵

As a result, the commissaries often were forced to buy at exorbitant prices from these engrossers, and even then insufficient amounts were procured. A law had been passed to prevent such practices, but it had proven ineffectual.⁹⁶

15. Supply depots and other factors

A significant aspect of the supply picture is the matter of supply depots. The selection of the supply depots was determined chiefly by location and transportation facilities. Danbury affords a good case study. Danbury was chosen in 1776 for this purpose as it was inland, yet accessible by fairly good roads to the Hudson, the Sound, and northern and eastern Connecticut. By April, 1777 large amounts of provisions, clothing, and munitions had been collected there. Danbury citizens [probably] welcomed the increased business brought to town by the supply depot, but they learned to their sorrow that such a depot might serve as a magnet for enemy incursions. On April 26, 1777 a marauding expedition of about 2,000 men under Tryon entered Danbury bent upon destruction of the military stores. Included in the doomed stores was a large amount of rum which was consumed, not by the flames, but as far as humanly possible, by the raiders!⁹⁷ Not only were the

⁹⁵ A. R. W., XIII, Doc. 42 abo (October 26, 1778).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ J. M. Bailey, History of Danbury, Connecticut (New York, 1896), p. 69.

stores destroyed, but also about twenty private homes and their furnishings, worth over £18,000.⁹⁸

Although there was frequent reference in various supply laws to impressment as a device for obtaining needed supplies, there is no evidence of its widespread use in Connecticut. Isolated cases such as the two below occurred, but it was not generally resorted to. In August, 1777 Jabez Huntington of Windham submitted an account for 4733 pounds of coffee and four hogsheads of rum seized.⁹⁹ In March of the same year a Captain Palmer impressed 11618 pounds of cheese in Stonington from the firm of Church and Hakes at six pence per pound with a one and one-half per cent commission added.¹⁰⁰

The business of procuring supplies was indeed big business. The records of disbursements in 1778-1780 by Jeremiah Wadsworth to Peter Colt and Henry Champion, the two chief Connecticut purchasers, give a good idea of the vast extent of these expenditures. From September 4, 1778 through June 20, 1780 Colt received \$7,212,922.28, and Champion, \$15,106,500, which totals loom large in the overall picture.¹⁰¹

16. Provision of clothing

Connecticut seems to have been considerably more successful in supplying the clothing needs of her militia and continental troops than the food needs. Two factors may be cited to account in part for the better performance. In first place, clothing involved a much smaller

⁹⁸ S. R. II, 42.

⁹⁹ A. R. W., LIII, Doc. 18.

¹⁰⁰ Richard A. Wheeler, History of Stonington (New London, 1900), p. 44.

¹⁰¹ Jeremiah Wadsworth, Commissary General of Purchases, 1779.

cost, both intrinsically and in that much of it was made in individual homes by families of the soldiers. In second place, Connecticut provided only for the clothing needs of her own men whereas the State provided food for far more than her own men.

Reference has already been made to the customary wartime device of the legislation in calling upon each town to provide certain items of supplies for each townsman in service.¹⁰² In January, 1778, upon the earnest recommendation of Congress the State ordered every town to provide one hunting shirt, two linen shirts, two pairs of "linen overalls," one pair of stockings, and two pairs of good shoes for every continental soldier in the town's quota, and half as many blankets as soldiers, all to be delivered to the county purchasing commissaries on or before June 1, 1778. Fair prices were to be paid to the towns, and impressment could be resorted to if necessary.¹⁰³ This measure was similar to ones passed earlier and later.

The implementation of official state legislative enactment occurred at the town level. Concerning the act of January 1778, for example, one may see the process unfolding in Middletown. A special town meeting was held on March 9, 1778 at which Jabez Hamlin presided. The town chose twenty-six men as a special committee to provide the articles of clothing ordered by the general assembly in January. The town also voted to assist this committee in accomplishing this. As a starter, nineteen persons voluntarily offered to provide a total of twenty-eight

¹⁰² See pp. 266-267. S. R. I, 424-425.

¹⁰³ S. R. I, 475-477. Similar acts included one of the Council on September 12, 1777 (S. R. I, 396), and one of the general assembly in October, 1777 (S. R. I, 421).

"Sutes" and eighteen blankets.¹⁰⁴

It is quite certain that the towns experienced great difficulties in meeting their quotas, and undoubtedly, many failed badly at times. As an example of town activity we may cite Waterbury's reaction to the act of October, 1777. A town meeting was held and fifteen men were appointed to oversee the collection of clothing. As a result, the town forwarded to and charged the State for 115 woolen shirts, 24 linen shirts, 133 frocks (hunting-shirts), 130 pairs of "overhalls," 184 pairs of stockings, 127 pairs of shoes, and 5 sacks of "tce cloth." The bill included 28 shillings for officers' fees for impressing several articles. Perhaps the 133 frocks represented Waterbury's quota of men.¹⁰⁵ It was a creditable performance, yet undoubtedly not a full compliance with requisitions.

The state commissaries performed dependably their undramatic duties. Typical of the hundreds of accounts extant listing purchases by state commissary agents is this one.

State of Ct to Edw Hallam for Clothing Purch.
for town of New London

Oct. 23 [1778]	to 314 p Shoes	25/	E 392:10:0
	to 127 d Stockings	15/	95:5:0
	[53] pr trousers	18/	47:14:0
	155 Shirts	30/	232:10:0
	24 Officers Shirts	30/	72:0:0
	52 Frocks	28/	72:16:0
	50 p Overhalls	24/	60:0:0
			<u>E 972:15:0</u>
	Commission 2 per cent		24:6:4
	Transportation viz. by		
	water & trucking etc.		3:0:0
	To W ^m Carrels for do &c.		4:10:0
	packing & Coopering		<u>E1004:11:4</u> ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Middletown Town Records, Envelope 3, 1778.

¹⁰⁵Henry Bronson, The History of Waterbury (Waterbury, 1858), pp. 341-342.

¹⁰⁶A. R. W., XII, Dec. 279.

17. Excellent record in supply of clothing

In general, Connecticut's cooperation with Congress on clothing matters was quite good, at least as far as enacting measures which Congress called for. Back in 1776 Congress introduced the office of Clothier General, and this official had agents in the various states. Also, Congress, from time to time, called upon the states for fixed amounts of clothing.¹⁰⁷

Usually the Connecticut troops of the Continental Army were well supplied with clothing. Even during the most bitter of winters, that at Valley Forge, the bloody footprints in the snow were not those of Connecticut men. Washington wrote Trumbull on March 31, 1778:

Among the troops returned unfit for duty for want of clothing, none of your state are included. The care of your legislature in providing clothing and necessaries of all kinds for their men is highly laudable, and reflects the greatest honor upon their patriotism and humanity.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps the most significant state legislation concerning clothing was the act passed in May, 1779 whereby Elijah Hubbard of Middletown was appointed "Sub or State Clothier," and Chauncey Whittlesey of Middletown, "Purchasing Clothier," and procedures of operation were outlined. Whittlesey, in general, was empowered to receive and pay for the clothing from the town, pack it, and forward it to the regimental clothiers. Hubbard was to reside and work among the main body of the Connecticut troops in the Continental Army.¹⁰⁹ The value of the clothing

¹⁰⁷ Journals of the Continental Congress, V, 467.

¹⁰⁸ M.H.S.C., L, 113.

¹⁰⁹ S. R. I, 277-279.

handled by each of the men ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds.¹¹⁰

For instance, the Pay Table was directed in January, 1780 to pay £100,000 to Whittlesey so that he could purchase officers' uniforms.¹¹¹

Some clothing was obtained from the French for the Continental Army, in which clothing Connecticut troops shared. In the fall of 1779 the Connecticut men had been supplied by the State agent with clothing "much inferior in quality to that delivered to the whole of the army afterwards."¹¹² The need for clothing allotments continued virtually up to the end of the war. For example, as late as October 19, 1782, one finds that the Council ordered Hubbard to send to Stratford for Lt. Colonel Canfield's regiment 710 pairs of shoes, 710 pairs of stockings, 355 pairs of woolen overalls, and 355 shirts, together with a suitable amount of white and blue cloth for coats, vests, etc.¹¹³ Despite occasional complaints, however, the Connecticut troops generally did have available adequate clothing as the Council especially devoted much attention to the clothing problem.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ebenezer Huntington, for example, encloses an order for £3000 on Elijah Hubbard for specified articles of clothing. Ebenezer Huntington to Andrew Huntington, July 7, 1780, Letters of Ebenezer Huntington. S. R. II, 455-456.

¹¹¹ S. R. II, 455-456.

¹¹² W. G. W., XVII, 184.

¹¹³ S. R. IV, 328.

¹¹⁴ Council and general assembly actions may be found in S. R. I, 82, 168, 170, 172, 175-176, 188, 351, 396, 424-425, 457, 462, 465-466, 475, 482, 510, 514, 537, 576, 583; II, 235, 277, 412; III, 135-136, 384-385, 467, 471, 482, 504-505, 510, 522, 553.

18. The supply contribution of Connecticut

From this study on a whole, one may conclude that Connecticut made a very great contribution of food and clothing for the Continental Army, for the French Army, and for its own militia and ships. In regard to food, it ranked among the two or three leading states for beef, pork, and rum. In the Congressional requisitions of 1780 which give a good idea at least of what was expected of Connecticut, the stated quota ranked as shown below.

Item	Comm.	N.H.	Mass.	R.I.	N.Y.	N.J.	Pa.	Md.	Del.	Va.	Rank of Conn.
Beef (pounds)	666,035	166,835	666,035	71,675	71,675	36,760	136,835 (or pork)	143,045	71,675		First
Bre (hhds)	100	25	225	30			225			60	Third
Bacon (pounds)	30,000						30,000	30,000	5,000	60,000	Second
Flour (barrels)	1,500			140		500	5,000	2,500	500		Third
Salt (bushels)	500					500					First
Grain (bushels)	9,142		4,571	2,285	2,285		9,142	11,423	6,857	29,714	Third
Oxen	400										First
Horses	1,000	150	1,020	200	600	696	1,500	400			Third

Among the foodstuffs, Connecticut actually lagged behind only in flour as it was not a large wheat growing state.¹¹⁶

The very fact that Washington turned consistently, and often first, to Trumbull for aid in the way of food and clothing revealed the great dependence put upon Connecticut for supplies. It is quite probable that Connecticut made a larger contribution to the war effort in her supplies than she did in any other way—military, naval, or political. In fact, she apparently ranked among the top two or three states in her overall contribution of food, clothing, and arms to the Continental cause.

CHAPTER XVIII

Currency and Financial Problems

The state of public credit vitally affected the individual person in Connecticut. The financial burdens of the war were large, since the State provided so many supplies and kept a large number of men under arms.

The emission of paper money began at the special session of April, 1775 when £50,000 was ordered issued, payable in two years.¹ In May £50,000 more was voted,² and the race between expenditures and paper issues was launched. A tax of seven pence on the pound was levied to ensure redemption. The general picture for the war period may be seen from the table below.

Statement of Bills emitted &c. by the State of
Connecticut, and now outstanding, August, 1777.³

Total Emitted	Date Emitted	Payable Date Redeemable	Tax Laid	On What List	Amount Retired
\$10,000	May 10, 1770	Dec. 31, 1777	2d.	1770	\$5,000
12,000	Oct. 10, 1771	Dec. 31, 1772 Sept. 30, 1773	1d. 1d.	1771 1772	6,000
12,000	June 1, 1773	Dec. 31, 1774 June 1, 1775	1d. 1d.	1772 1773	
15,000	Jan. 2, 1775	Dec. 31, 1775 Dec. 31, 1776	1d. 1d.	1774 1775	
50,000	May 10, 1775	May 10, 1777	7d.	1775	
50,000	June 1, 1775	June 1, 1778	7d.	1776	

¹ C. R. XIV, 432.

² C. R. XV, 14.

³ A. R. W. VII, Dec. 436.

Total Emitted	Date Emitted	Payable Date Redeemable	Tax Laid	On What List	Amount Required
50,000	July 1, 1775	Dec. 31, 1779	7d.	1777	
60,000	June 7, 1776	Dec. 31, 1780	8d.	1778	
50,000	June 19, 1776	Dec. 31, 1781	7d.	1779	

Issued \$309,000. Burned 11,000. Outstanding 289,000.

\$60,000 issued in notes of £10 each payable at 4 per cent in three years.

\$72,000 borrowed and payable at 6 per cent in one year.

The story of currency emissions was completed by the issuing of the following amounts: £335,000 in 1778, £49,000 in 1779, and £420,000 in 1780.

The grand total for Connecticut in the war period (April, 1775-1783) was approximately £1,200,000. Although a large total, it, fortunately, did not compare with six of the other states. Approximate totals for the Continental Congress and the Thirteen States follow:⁴

Continental Congress	\$191,552,000
Virginia	£51,917,000
South Carolina	16,215,000
Massachusetts	13,400,000
North Carolina	2,653,000
Pennsylvania	2,597,000
Maryland	1,867,000
Connecticut	1,221,000
New York	787,000
Rhode Island	441,000
New Hampshire	413,000
New Jersey	241,000
Georgia	203,000
Delaware	168,000

The treasury of the State remained almost constantly in a sadly depleted condition despite higher taxes and aid from Congress. In addition to the

⁴ Totals are rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars for the Continental Congress, and, nearest thousand pounds for the states. The table is based on Ralph V. Harlow, "Aspects of Revolutionary Finance, 1771-1783," American Historical Review, XXXV (October, 1929), opp. 50.

taxes already listed for the sinking of specific emissions of paper bills, other heavy taxes were levied, such as one shilling on the pound in August, 1777 (payable by November 1) and twelve pence on the pound in October, 1777 (payable by April 15, 1778).⁵ In a prewar year, a general tax of one pence on the pound was typical, and two, exceptional.⁶ In a sense, of course, a vicious circle was set up by the heavy issues of paper money. The inflation cheapened the money, prices rose rapidly, the currency depreciated and so more and more had to be issued to cover extraordinary war expenses. A few far-sighted men like Roger Sherman spoke strongly for much heavier taxation to curb the price inflation and currency depreciation by paying off a larger proportion of current expenses,⁷ but they were in a decided minority. Of course, the legislators tried hard to legislate confidence in the state and continental paper money. Whereas, "some evil-minded persons, inimical to the liberties of the United States of America, have endeavoured to depreciate the bills of credit of this and the said United States," a law was passed strictly prohibiting any actions which would devalue the paper money and give preferences to hard money. Heavy penalties were provided, and the paper bills were firmly established as legal tender in payment of all taxes and obligations.⁸ Other similar acts were passed from time to time later.

The depreciation of the Continental and State paper currency began

⁵ S. R. I, 377, 425.

⁶ See C. R. XIII, 300, 516 for examples in 1770 and 1771.

⁷ Boardman, pp. 184-188.

⁸ S. R. I, 5-6. See S. R. I, 231-232 for the act which prohibited circulation of paper bills of other states in Connecticut.

almost immediately, and gradually gathered momentum, despite all laws and exhortations by public officials, until it ran out of control in 1779 and 1780. On December 16, 1779, Ezra Stiles noted that Yale students had been dismissed since the steward could not provide food due to the rapid depreciation of continental money which had "fallen nearly a quarter in three weeks or a month past."⁹ Congress, finally, openly recognized the situation and in March, 1780 officially devalued the currency to one-fortieth of face value in terms of Spanish milled dollars. The Connecticut legislature adopted the Congressional table which covered all contracts entered into from September 1, 1777 to March 15, 1780. The Connecticut law applied to Continental and state bills. A good idea of the depreciation can be obtained from this table.

Value of one hundred Spanish milled dollars¹⁰

Sept. 1, 1777	100	Mar. 1, 1779	1000
Dec. 1, 1777	133	June 1, 1779	1344
Mar. 1, 1778	175	Sept. 1, 1779	1800
June 1, 1778	265	Dec. 1, 1779	2597
Sept. 1, 1778	400	Mar. 15, 1780	4000
Dec. 1, 1778	634		

This drastic official step largely destroyed the little public confidence remaining in the paper currency.¹¹ On May 2, 1781 Ezra Stiles commented that "At Philadelphia Continental is 150 for 1. At N. Haven 100 for 1. At Boston 130 for 1."¹²

⁹ Ezra Stiles Diary, III.

¹⁰ The Congressional table gave values as of the first and fifteenth day of every month. It undoubtedly was quite rough in its degree of accuracy. Certainly the depreciation began long before September 1, 1777, for example. The table is given in full in S. R. III, 171.

¹¹ Albert S. Bolles, Industrial History of the United States (Norwich, Connecticut, 1878), p. 136.

¹² Ezra Stiles Diary, III.

As in every period of distress, a multitude of remedies were propounded by many interested persons. Governor Trumbull in his opening speech to the general assembly at the January, 1778 session advised that "too great Quantities of Money [are] now Circulating." So Connecticut people were "glutted with Money--and curtailed of ye necessarys of Life--everything which we can Eat, or Drink, or Wear, becomes more valuable than Cash, And, The only probable means of restoring the lost Balance appears to be, by reducing the Quantity of the circulating Medium, by large Taxation: and giving every Encouragement in our Power, to Importation."¹³ Although the Governor's program contained much merit, the legislature did nothing at that session to translate it into action. Levying heavier taxes was no more popular in Connecticut in 1778 than one hundred and seventy years later!

The pages of the Courant and other papers almost boiled over with the warm counsel of citizens who had the solution for the currency and price ills of the state. There was a fairly general agreement on the causes, especially the huge emission of unsupported paper money, and nature of the depreciation and wild inflation; but very varied cures were proposed. "A, B." advised complete freedom of buying and selling;¹⁴ but "Cato" who wrote a long series of articles upon financial and commercial topics supported heavy taxation. Cato furiously attacked the rich farmers, "those GREAT EUGS whose eyes stood out with fatness, and who have collops of fat on their flanks."¹⁵ A "Countreyman," however, put

¹³ A. T. P. XX, Dec. 168.

¹⁴ C. C., May 12, 1777.

¹⁵ December 30, 1777.

the entire blame upon the foolish actions of legislative bodies and leaders. He concluded with this blast:

Let the members of the last assembly try to excuse themselves to their God and to their country for having seen public faith pledged for near five hundred thousand pounds, and totally neglecting to provide any means to furnish one half that sum to [redeem] it."¹⁶

He returned several weeks later to pay further respects to the legislators as men who voted with an eye only to the next election and blamed the mess upon a few traders. His positive program involved more equal and much greater taxation based upon property.¹⁷

Another anonymous writer joined the public debate in September by denying that the large depreciation was caused by improper steps by the general assembly. The general situation simply was such that the legislators could not lay taxes adequate to redeem all the paper money.¹⁸

One of the best contributions to appear in several years was made by a writer in the October 20, 1778, issue of the Courant. Quoting at length from a work on commerce, he set forth the basic workings of the law of supply and demand. He sharply criticized the prevalent view that a very small class, called "jockeys and sharpers," had caused the tremendous price rise. He attributed the current situation to: (1) excessive demand for scarce articles; and (2) the huge amount of money in circulation.

This phase of the public discussion of currency and price problems

¹⁶ C. C., August 4, 1778.

¹⁷ August 25, 1778.

¹⁸ September 27, 1778.

was climaxed by a stimulating article written by "Senex" who propounded a lengthy list of very pertinent questions, and answered them with the unsolicited help of "Honestus." Senex asked whether justice was being done to the entire creditor class who were being paid off in cheap money, at present worth about one-sixth the value of the debt at the time it was incurred. He gave information of interest on price levels too. Why, he asked, should the farmer who in 1775 got five or six shillings per bushel for wheat, in 1778 get five or six dollars? And, why had beef risen from sixteen to twenty shillings per hundred pounds in 1775 to five to six pounds in 1778? And, what about clergymen whose salaries now will buy one-sixth what they bought several years ago?¹⁹ "Honestus" replied that all of "Senex's" questions could be boiled down to one: "What ought to be done with regard to our paper medium?" To "Honestus" the only honest course was a full redemption of it. Not to do so meant "the prostitution of all public honor" and "state suicide." He pointed out, incidentally, and very well, that Connecticut's large contribution of supplies to the Continental forces had caused an unusually large inflow of Continental bills into the State.²⁰

A closer look at Connecticut's taxation system is useful. An important phase is the decline in assessed valuations which occurred during the war.

¹⁹ The impact of rising prices upon a clergyman and his family is vividly illustrated in Nehemiah Strong's letters to his parishioners in Hartford in 1779, in which he explained his dire financial straits because his salary had already fallen in true value to one-half what it was worth when voted. Unless speedy relief was given almost immediately, he would be forced to quit his position. Wyllys Papers, C.E.S.C., XXI, 465-466.

²⁰ C. C., December 15, 22, 29, 1778. Articles upon the general topic continued to appear in the Courant in later years, as in the issues of July 17 and 31, and November 13, 1781.

Assessment of Representative Towns²¹

<u>Town</u>	<u>Dec., 1775 List</u> ²²	<u>Jan., 1780</u>	<u>Jan., 1782</u>	<u>Per Cent</u> <u>Change</u> <u>1775-1782</u>	<u>Per Cent</u> <u>Population</u> <u>Change</u> <u>1774-1782</u>
New Haven	£72,516	63,286	58,461	-19	-4
Hartford	51,007	45,836	42,846	-16	+8
Middletown	43,551	39,307	39,897	- 8	-6
New London	35,685	27,040	29,052	-19	-3
Killingly	29,148	24,037	23,734	-17	-3
Litchfield	27,061	29,067	26,887	-.6	+20
Canaan	15,855	16,708	16,126	+ 2	+26
Windham	32,383	30,785	30,691	- 5	+1
Norwich	66,452	65,924	59,772	-10	0
Fairfield	<u>51,472</u>	<u>46,325</u>	<u>41,771</u>	<u>-19</u>	<u>+8</u>
Totals	£425,130	£388,335	£369,237	-13	+2

Of interest, too, was the mode of assessing each individual for which the law of May, 1778 may be taken as a fair sample.

Mode of Assessing in Connecticut

	<u>May, 1778</u>
Poll tax, 16-21 years of age	£18-0-0
Poll tax, 21-70 years of age	18-0-0
Oxen, 4 years old	4-0-0
Cows, 3 years old	3-0-0
Steers, 3 years old	3-0-0
Steers and heifers, 2 years old	2-0-0
Steers and heifers, 1 year old	1-0-0
Horses, 3 years old	3-0-0

²¹

C. R. XV, 214-215; S. R. II, 467; S. R. IV, 59-60.

²²

All assessment totals are to the nearest pound.

May, 1778 (Cont.)

Horses, 2 years old	2-0-0
Horse, 1 year old	1-0-0
Swine, 1 year old and more	1-0-0
Acres of plow land	9-10-0
Acres of upland mowing, clear pasture	0-8-0
Acres of boggy meadow, unmowed boggy meadow	0-5-0
Acres of meadow land in Hartford County	9-15-0
Acres of other meadow land	9-7-8
Acres of bush pasture	0-2-0

May, 1778²³

Dwelling Houses--first rate	3-0-0
second rate	2-0-0
third rate	1-10-0
fourth rate	1-0-0
Tons of vessel, per ton	0-15-0
Chaise or curriole--covered	5-0-0
Chaise or curriole--open	3-0-0
Cattle let out--on just value	8 per cent
Sheep let out--on just value	6 per cent
Money at interest	6 per cent
Traders, tradesmen, taverners, attorneys, physicians, manufacturers, etc.	net profits ²⁴
Engrossers	£50 added

It should be noted that, in general, soldiers on active duty were exempted from taxes.²⁵ Several other features of Connecticut's taxation system are worthy of comment too. The heavy reliance placed upon the poll tax,

²³S. R. II, 14. The penalty for failure to report a taxable item was an assessment of four-fold its value. Sometimes the four-fold list for a town amounted to a large total. For example, Farmington was reported as having £2149:16:0 in four-fold assessments. S. R. I, 489. Appeal against excessive assessment was permissible. S. R. I, 471.

²⁴S. R. I, 365 (Act of August, 1777).

²⁵

C. R. XV, 313, I, 471.

a regressive tax, was obvious. Farmers were heavily taxed, and had been for a long time, as it was easy to tax them because one could see their possessions very easily. What was essentially an income tax was passed in August, 1777 to tap the incomes of manufacturers, merchants, and professional men. The taxation system was unscientific, and bore most heavily relatively upon the poorer classes who paid the same poll tax.

To see how a typical merchant was "listed" one may examine William Ellery's assessments for 1780:

2 head [poll tax]	36-0-0
4 horses 12 £ 4 Cows £2	24-0-0
1 Yoke oxen	8-0-0
23 Acres Meadow Land 15/	17-5-0
4 d ^o upland 8/	1-12-0
6 d ^o plow 10/	3-0-0
20 Acres Bush pasture 2/	2-0-0
22 Acres home lotts	1-0-0
1 house 15/	2-5-0
	<u>£95-2-0</u> ²⁶

His assessments totalled £112 14sh. in 1781, and most of the increase was due to an "upper mill" valued at £20.²⁷

The dizzy spiral of depreciation, meanwhile, had continued to accelerate after the Congressional devaluation. Ezra Stiles' report of 120 for 1 at New Haven in May, 1781 showed the absurdity of the whole situation. The final blow seems to have been delivered by southern merchants and brokers who threw a large quantity of paper money into New England, where it was worth more; and, as a result, the bills disappeared almost entirely from circulation.²⁸ The Courant advertisements substantiate

²⁶ William Ellery's Account Book, p. 155.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 177.

²⁸ Bolles, p. 143.

the trend as an increasing number of merchants asked for hard money.

Jeremiah Wadsworth advertised in November, 1781 "A New And Fresh Assortment of English and India Goods" which must have quickened the hearts of many a Connecticut housewife. At the bottom of the advertisement, below the impressive list of fine goods, however, were the very pertinent words: "HARD CASH, or BILLS on FRANCE, will be received in payment for the above Goods."²⁹

By and large, the effects of the financial measures taken, and of the currency depreciation, in particular, were very uneven as to classes and individuals. Some speculators in money, as always, did make great gains. Those who could adjust most quickly to the inflationary situation profited; but all classes on a fixed income suffered greatly. This included the soldiers, clergy, teachers, state and other public employees, and the like. In general, the farmers and merchants mostly were able to raise their prices so as to keep their heads above water, and in some cases to grow wealthy. The taxation system was not designed to tax away heavy war profits, since nothing beyond a small flat income tax was employed in this respect.

CHAPTER XIX

Interstate Economic Cooperation, 1776-1781

Particularism was the bane of the Americans in the Revolutionary struggle for freedom. Its evil influence was well demonstrated in the reluctance for and ineffectiveness of attempts at real interstate economic action. Yet, in view of the rampant jealousies between States, the fact that Connecticut representatives participated in some nine interstate conventions to discuss military and economic matters is remarkable.

Some of the interstate conventions were concerned principally with military problems; and some, principally with economic problems. For this study only, the actions taken on such economic matters as prices, currency, and embargoes will be considered.

As a sort of preview of the interstate conventions, a brief table may be useful.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>States Represented</u>	<u>Connecticut Delegate(s)</u>
Providence	December 25, 1776- January 3, 1777	Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut	Richard Law, Nathaniel Wales, Titus Hosmer
Springfield	July 30-August 6, 1777	New Hampshire, Massa- chusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York	Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, Titus Hosmer
New Haven	January 15- February 2, 1778	New Hampshire, Massa- chusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	Roger Sherman, William Hillhouse, Benjamin Huntington
Hartford	October 20- October 28, 1779	New Hampshire, Massa- chusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York	Eliphalet Dyer, Benjamin Huntington, Oliver Ellsworth, James Wadsworth
Philadelphia	January 29- February 8, 1780	New Hampshire, Massa- chusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland	Roger Sherman, Oliver Ellsworth

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>States Represented</u>	<u>Connecticut Delegate(s)</u>
Boston	August 3-9, 1780	New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut	Jesse Root
Hartford	November 8-22, 1780	Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York	Eliphalet Dyer, William Williams
Providence (abortive)	April 12-17, 1781	Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut	Jonathan Trumbull, Jr.
Providence	June 26-27, 1781	New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut	Henry Champion

The honor of initiating the proposal for the first convention of an interstate nature goes to Massachusetts in the fall of 1776.¹ At first, Connecticut declined the invitation to meet at Providence to join in measures for securing the bills of credit in the states against depreciation because Congress was considering the subject and it was feared that such a step by the New England States would produce jealousies in other States.² At nearly the eleventh hour, however, the general assembly voted in favor of sending delegates to Providence with the announced objectives of consulting upon (1) raising an army for the defence of New England and (2) regulations for supporting the currency, and preventing oppression of the soldiers and people "by extravagant prices." Four delegates were appointed of whom three actually attended, Richard Law, Nathaniel Wales, and Titus Hosmer.³

What action did the Convention take? Upon Rhode Island's suggestion the scope of the agenda was broadened.⁴ On the subject of currency, the

¹About twenty Massachusetts towns had petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for relief. Morris, p. 95.

²Trumbull to Governor Cooke, December 4, 1776, American Archives, 5th Ser., III, 1077.

³S. R. I, 587.

⁴Morris, p. 95.

Convention recommended no further emissions of paper money, but advocated the levying of taxes, the employment of borrowing if necessary, and the retirement of paper money at the times scheduled. Due to the "unbounded avarice of many persons" and the alarming cost of labor, the Convention took very specific and detailed action. Farm labor was to be paid a maximum of three shillings four pence per day; and the wages of mechanics and other labor was to be calculated in just proportion. Some of the price ceilings set were as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Connecticut</u>	<u>Massachusetts</u>	<u>Rhode Island</u>	<u>New Hampshire</u>
Wheat	per bushel	6sh.	7sh. 6d.	7sh. 6d.	7sh. 6d.
Rye	per bushel	3sh. 6d.	4sh. 6d.	4sh. 6d.	4sh. 6d.
Corn	per bushel	3sh.	3sh. 4d.	3sh. 6d.	3sh. 6d.
Wool	per pound	2sh.	2sh.	2sh.	2sh. 2d.
Pork	per pound	3 1/2-3 3/4d.	4-4 1/2d.	3 1/2-4 1/2d.	4 1/2-5d.
Beef	per hundred pound	24sh.	25sh.	25sh.	25sh.
Butter	per pound	10d.	10d.	10d.	10d.
Coffee	per pound	1sh. 4d.	1sh. 4d.	1sh. 4d.	1sh. 4d.

In addition, maximum prices were established for hides, salt, rum, sugar, molasses, cheese, peas, beans, potatoes, stockings, shoes, salted pork, oats, flax, tallow, tow cloth, and flannels. Moreover, imported goods, upon which wholesale profits of five hundred and six hundred per cent and retail profits of forty to fifty per cent more were reported, were to have only stated markups, which were less than half those in the practices cited. The Convention also recommended empowering suitable persons with authority to seize hoarded goods and pay for them at a reasonable price. Penalties were to be imposed for any sales at higher than the listed price ceiling, with twenty shillings, or the price sold (whichever the higher), to be the penalty.⁵

⁵ S. R. I, 585-599.

Several features of this program stand out. One is its comprehensiveness; another, is the price differential which involved lower prices for Connecticut upon most articles. In part, this may have involved realization that these items were more plentiful in Connecticut, and hence cost less normally. To have implemented this vast program would have necessitated: (1) very close and smooth interstate cooperation; (2) a powerful and efficient administrative control and machinery in each state. As is well known, neither condition existed in the revolutionary period.

This is not to say, however, that the recommendations were ignored. The four states responded fairly speedily with laws covering at least part of the program.⁶ Connecticut enacted a wage and price scale in which the scale for farm labor set the previous month at three shillings daily was lifted to three shillings four pence; and the other price recommendations were followed exactly. Previous price laws of May and November were repealed.⁷ In general, public opinion seems to have strongly supported the Providence proposals. Public meetings at New Haven and Boston, for example, endorsed the program and set up special committees to enforce it.⁸ Congress studied the proposals; and, although a few members thought they detected the odor of an embryonic New England confederacy, the majority approved the proposals as a necessity.⁹

The efforts of the Providence group apparently had little effect in

⁶ Morris, p. 96.

⁷ S. R. I, 62-63, 97-100.

⁸ Morris, p. 103.

⁹ Esra Stiles Diary, II.

checking rising prices of goods and labor.¹⁰ In the following spring, Connecticut altered its price law and authorized higher prices upon many regulated items, and the other states did likewise.¹¹ Probably the Providence convention's chief significance for Connecticut was in stimulating public thought and expression of opinion upon the basic economic problems created by the war, and creating more awareness of the interstate nature of the problems and the consequent necessity for solutions based on interstate cooperation. Certainly there was no further example of Connecticut declining an invitation to such an interstate meeting.

The Springfield meeting of July 1777, the second in the series, was sponsored by Massachusetts, and met to consider currency, monopoly, and embargo problems. Connecticut presented in Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, and Titus Hosmer, an unusually strong delegation which spoke its mind frequently and positively. Sherman believed that the war should be financed by fairly heavy taxation and foreign loans. He pointed to the plentiful crops and the ability of the people to carry heavier taxes.¹² Again, strong and specific resolutions to retire the paper currency and to increase taxation were adopted. In regard to the price-fixing acts against "monopoly and oppression," the body advised their repeal. The delegates realized that this left the commissaries in a bad situation for procurement of supplies, so their problems were all-too-generously commended to the several legislatures! In a like

¹⁰ Adams, p. 36.

¹¹ S. R. I, 230-231, Morris, p. 103.

¹² Adams, p. 37.

manner, the Convention dealt with food problems of the soldiers' families.¹³ The repeal of the price fixing acts was tantamount to an admission that the earlier Providence proposals had failed dismally in practice. This failure, however, was largely attributed to the fact that no price-fixing laws had been enacted outside of New England.¹⁴

Connecticut again took the convention proposals seriously and in August repealed the various acts and alterations thereof relating to prices and monopolies.¹⁵ In no state had it been possible to hold prices down or prevent depreciation of the paper bills,¹⁶ so that the repeal of the act was considered wise.

Congress meanwhile had been considering the price problem and the actions of the Springfield Convention. On November 22 it divided the states into three groups¹⁷ and recommended that each group hold a convention in order to regulate prices of labor, manufactures, farm produce and imports, tavern rates, and impressment of supplies. The northern group convened on schedule at New Haven on January 15, 1778 and proceeded to work out the most elaborate and detailed program of wage and price control yet drawn up in the war period.

Connecticut's delegates played a leading role at the Convention.

¹³S. R. I, 599-606.

¹⁴Simeon E. Baldwin, The New Haven Convention of 1778, Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society (New Haven, 1882), III, 38-39.

¹⁵S. R. I, 386.

¹⁶Adams, p. 38.

¹⁷Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina delegates were to meet at Fredericksburg; South Carolina and Georgia delegates at Charleston. These conventions were not held, however. In fact, the southern states seemed thoroughly disinterested in any interstate or intrastate action on prices and currency. Samuel Huntington and Oliver Wolcott to Governor Trumbull, April 29, 1778, Jeremiah Wadsworth Letter Books, 1778-1783.

After nearly two weeks of general discussion, the convention appointed Roger Sherman, Benjamin Huntington, Robert Treat Paine (Massachusetts), and Nathaniel Peabody (New Hampshire) to prepare the official report for the convention.¹⁸ The two Connecticut delegates must have been held in high regard to be chosen as one-half of the special committee when seven states had representatives in attendance.

The report was so detailed that it can only be briefly summarized here. In general, the prices in effect in 1774 were taken as a guide. Prices for all types of labor were fixed at a maximum of seventy-five per cent above the 1774 level, as were all manufactures not specifically set otherwise. Prices of other articles or services regulated included teaming, hemp, flax, wool, cloth, hosiery, hats, wire and wool-cards, European goods, prize goods, tavern rates. Specific prices were listed for rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, whiskey, brandy, wheat, peas, flour, rye, corn, oats, pork, cheese, beef, hides, tallow, butter, leather, shoes, calf skins, iron, and steel.¹⁹ The Convention, therefore, carried out thoroughly the directions given it by Congress to establish proper price levels.

The Connecticut legislature met a few days later to act upon these recommendations, among other things. Governor Trumbull, being ill at home, wrote a letter to the general assembly in which he expressed doubts about the wisdom of regulating prices of articles immediately required by the Army. A low price for provisions and imported articles would deter the farmer from producing and the merchant from handling these items.²⁰

¹⁸ Baldwin, III, 48.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 52-54.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

Despite the Governor's lukewarm attitude, the legislators at once framed a law embodying the recommendations of the Convention.²¹ Within a short time Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania adopted similar acts. Congress, however, temporized in its consideration of the bill until June when the continued fall in value of Continental currency demonstrated that price-fixing in itself, and alone, was not the cure for the economic sickness of the United States. By a resolution of June 4, regulation of prices was given up and the States were advised to repeal their laws.²² The general assembly was in session when Congress' resolve was received, whereupon the Connecticut price law was suspended until October, at which time it was repealed.²³

In the following year, 1779, the currency-price situation steadily became more chaotic throughout New England, and the other states. Massachusetts, therefore, proposed another convention to be held at Hartford in October to consider measures to prevent practices boosting prices, and the further depreciation of currency. Her invitation was accepted by the four states concerned, and the body convened on October 20, 1779. This body recommended a new attempt to fix prices which should be made by all states as far south as Virginia, and called for a meeting at Philadelphia in January. Also, Connecticut and New York

²¹ S. R. I, 524-528.

²² Journals of Congress, IV, 569-570. Washington laid before Congress letters from Champion, Wadsworth, and Reed. From their letters he judged that the measures adopted at New Haven would "have a disagreeable effect upon our supplies of meat...." Therefore, he thought that the proposals should be suspended for the time being. W. G. W. XI, 74.

²³ S. R. II, 12-13, 134.

were asked to enact price control acts like those of their New England neighbors.²⁴ Furthermore, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire were requested to repeal such embargo acts as they had in effect.²⁵ Congress endorsed the report, and on November 19 resolved that the States ought to pass laws holding prices to a level not over twenty times the usual rates in 1774. Thus, to such a sorry predicament had the currency-price situation come!

The convention at Philadelphia turned out to be a complete fiasco. Delegates did come from seven of the states, including Connecticut, but the New York and Virginia delegations failed to appear. The Convention took no positive action beyond adjourning to April 4, and it failed to reassemble then.

The next convention at Boston in August, 1780 consisted of only four men, Thomas Cushing and Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts Bay, John Langdon of New Hampshire, and Jesse Root of Connecticut. Rhode Island was invited but failed to attend. The delegate from Connecticut was instructed to cooperate in adopting measures to forward the military campaigns and to supply the French allies. Various resolves were adopted concerning supply problems. No specific recommendations were made regarding prices or embargoes beyond advising the States to prevent exorbitant prices being charged for provisions. Reference to these

²⁴No action was taken at the current October session. In January, 1780 a price fixing act was passed, which may be found in A. R. W., XVIII, Doc. 71. It was to lie unpublished until the other New England States and New York passed acts agreeable to the Congressional resolve of November 19. The act apparently was passed on February 15, 1780 according to the Journal of the lower house, but was neither recorded nor printed elsewhere. S. R. II, 568 fn.

²⁵S. P. II, 567-569. Connecticut newspapers gave full coverage to this convention. The November 16 issue of the Courant and the November 24 issue of the Connecticut Gazette carried the resolutions in full.

actions has been made elsewhere. Concerning currency the body asked the states to provide for sinking a substantial portion of their bills annually.²⁶

Likewise, the seventh interstate convention involving Connecticut, that held at Hartford in November, 1780, was involved chiefly with military and supply problems. Punctual compliance by the states with congressional requisitions for troops, money, and provisions was strongly urged. The sixth and seventh resolutions called for the States to effect Congressional action on adequate taxation to fund part of the continental debt, and for the States to sink their quotas of bills, too.²⁷

The final two conventions were held in April and June, 1781 at Providence. The first, or abortive, Providence Convention resulted from the Hartford meeting at which the Governor of Connecticut had been empowered to set the time and place for the next meeting. This conference was called to arrange the contracts for supplying the French forces; and, as already has been seen, upon the failure of New Hampshire, New York, and the French agents to come, it was adjourned without action.²⁸

The final Providence Convention was convened on June 26, 1781 to deal with the matter of providing beef supplies for the Continental Army. Henry Champion ably handled Connecticut's end of the affair in which exact quotas were prescribed on a definite schedule for the New England States.²⁹ Thus the interstate war conventions ended. The favorable

²⁶S. R. III, 561. See Chap. XVIII for further details.

²⁷S. R. III, 571-572.

²⁸S. R. III, 574-575.

²⁹S. R. III, 575-576.

turn in military events climaxed by the complete victory at Yorktown rendered unnecessary any further conventions. The occasional exchange of letters between Trumbull and other Governors constituted virtually the extent of interstate cooperation after June, 1781.

It would be easy to dismiss the conventions simply as the actions of patriotic men who proposed ambitious plans for controlling complicated problems of supply, troops, currency, prices, and embargoes--plans which were almost entirely failures in practice. Yet actually, the Conventions did succeed in influencing greatly both Congress and the individual states, and in encouraging the weak but vital spirit of interstate cooperation. In fact, the recommendations of the Boston convention certainly looked toward a stronger central government. The conventions cannot, therefore, fairly be written off as complete failures. Connecticut's role in all of these conventions was a pivotal one--in part due to the excellence of her representatives, and in part due to her economic strength as to supplies and currency.

CHAPTER XX

Interstate Trade

A large amount of material concerning Connecticut's interstate trade has already been considered under such topics as supplies, finances, and interstate cooperation. An attempt will be made here to present and evaluate certain additional evidence as well as the general overall picture of interstate trade.

Again the official customs records of the port of New Haven are invaluable in ascertaining the nature of the trade of revolutionary New Haven—in this case, the coasting trade. One may assume that other Connecticut ports closely followed New Haven's pattern. Two sample periods are submitted below to recreate the picture.

I. Coasters Inward at New Haven, Sept. 27-Nov. 30, 1776

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Crew</u>	<u>Where Registered</u>	<u>From Whence</u>	<u>Cargo</u> (amounts omitted)
<u>Independence</u>	William Brown	30	3	Providence	Providence	West India rum, brown sugar, coffee, chocolate
<u>Betsey</u>	Zephaniah Pease	20	2	Newport	Newport	rum, wine, coffee, brandy, claret, beer
<u>Dolphin</u>	John Robinson	[14] [1]	2	New York	Stamford	[in ballast]
<u>Pegge</u>	Samuel Pond	10	2	Newport	Newport	sugar, old copper, rum, coffee
<u>Polly</u>	David Olds	10	2	New London	Newport	rum, wine, sugar
<u>Victory</u>	Benjamin Lindsey	20	3	Providence	Newport	brown sugar, coffee, rum, English cheese, "oyl"
<u>Freelove</u>	Samuel Westoot	27	3		Providence	loaf sugar, brown sugar, rum, tobacco, pimento, coffee, codfish
<u>Polly</u>	Robert Olds	10	2	New London	Newport	salt, sugar
<u>King of Prussia</u>	Josephus Fitch	7	2		Providence	salt, prize tea ¹

II. Coasters Inward at New Haven, Jan. 8-July 2, 1779

<u>Sun Flower</u>	Capt. Price	15	3	Falmouth	Barnstable	salt, liver oil, fish
<u>Speedwell</u>	Thomas W[re]son	15	2	New Haven	Nantucket	salt, fish
<u>Dolphin</u>	Solomon Godfrey	30	4	Nantucket	Barnstable	liver oil, codfish, salt, indigo, etc.
<u>Polly</u>	Nathan Brand	25	3		Norwalk	corn, rye, oats, wheat, flour, pork

II. Coasters Inward at New Haven, Jan. 8-July 2, 1779 (Cont.)

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Crew</u>	<u>Where Registered</u>	<u>From Whence</u>	<u>Cargo</u> (amounts omitted)
<u>May Flower</u>	Nicholas Webster	26	3		Providence	rum, molasses, fish, limes, chocolate, sugar, iron hollow ware, pork, sheeps wool
<u>Dolphin</u>	Isaac Tyler	20	3		Providence	molasses, steel, oysters, snuff, weavers' stays, salt
<u>Speedwell</u>	Thomas Wilson	20	3		New London	rice, sugar, rum, tar, sugar, coffee, molasses, old muskets
<u>Speedwell</u>	Ebenezer [Fronsend]	20	3		New London	molasses, salt, sugar, coffee, mackerel ²

The number of coasting ships entering from September 27, 1776 through July 2, 1779 varied as follows: in 1776 (three months)—9; 1777-17; 1778--25; and 1779 (six months)—8. No pronounced trend is discernible; and the main feature seems to be the smallness of the total for every year. Of this total of fifty-nine ships, twenty-eight came from Massachusetts, eleven from Rhode Island, and twenty from other Connecticut ports.³

Nathaniel Shaw's extensive letters give valuable clues as to the interstate commercial relations typical of the leading Connecticut merchants. For a period of four months in 1776 Shaw had business dealings with the following, among others:

² District of New Haven, List of Coasters Inwards.

³ Ibid.

I. In New England

Broom and Sears--Bedford	James Keithe--Portsmouth
Moses Bush--Chatham	Clark and Nightingale--Providence
Chris Champlin--Kingston	Joseph Lawrence--Providence
James Clarkson--Newburyport	William Potter--Rhode Island
William Foster--Boston	David Ships--Providence
Thomas Johnson--Chatham	Daniel Tilinghast--Providence

II. In Other States

Jean Baptiste--Albany	John W. Stanley--New Bern (N.C.)
John Gelston--Sag Harbor	N. and J. Wharton--Philadelphia

Both the records of New Haven's coastal trade and the mercantile letters of Nathaniel Shaw emphasize the close and extensive nature of Connecticut's trade with her neighbors, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Furthermore, as shortly will be demonstrated, an enormous amount of interstate trade involving the three states occurred under permits to export and or import despite the embargo laws.⁵ In fact, the largest proportion of the wartime legitimate trade with Massachusetts and Rhode Island fell into this permit category. The State Records and Archives are filled with hundreds of these cases in which dire distress was reported and food was allowed to be exported by special permit.

The nature of the trade caused forebodings and suspicions on both sides. General Silliman, for example, wrote Trumbull that some of his soldiers had mutinied due to a reduction in their allowance of provisions below that of the Continental Army. The matter had been temporarily settled, but Silliman wanted a more generous supply. He felt certain that Connecticut had plenty of provisions because he observed boats going

⁴The exact period covered is August 9, 1776 through December 30, 1776. It is very probable that Shaw dealt with others too in this brief period. Nathaniel Shaw, Letters, 1776.

⁵See Chap. XXI.

frequently and freely from Fairfield and nearby ports loaded with provisions for Martha's Vineyard.⁶ As long as there were shortages, actual or feared, of any articles, many Connecticut citizens experienced misgivings about the large export of goods to the eastward under permit.

Likewise, certain doubts were experienced by many citizens of the neighboring states. At a town meeting in Boston on September 21, 1779 a committee reported that the country people were "under apprehensions with respect to the consequences from such Quantities of Goods, being sent to Connecticut or sold to the Freeholders of that State."⁷ Since cash often was lacking, Massachusetts towns and merchants undoubtedly were hard put to it to procure attractive enough goods to exchange for the precious corn, rye, flour, etc. needed from Connecticut. One may note such concern in a petition of the selectmen of Plymouth to Governor Trumbull that two merchants of the town had loaded a schooner with "choice good rock salt, liver oyl, codfish, rum, &c." for the express object of obtaining wheat, corn, rye, and flour from Connecticut.⁸

A letter from John Proctor of Boston to Dudley Woodbridge of Norwich, in July, 1778 indicates something of the difficulties of interstate trade. In reply to Woodbridge's request for "Teneriffe," wine, Proctor declared that he located some at only one place, at a price of £150 per pipe. Wines were growing scarcer and more expensive, but he could get Fayal wine at £120 per pipe. Meanwhile he expressed hope that the six barrels of flour reported en route would soon arrive, as Boston was in

⁶ Gold Sellick Silliman to Governor Trumbull, August 2, 1777. M.H.S.C., LXII, 99-100.

⁷ Boston Town Records, p. 89.

⁸ M.H.S.C., LXII, 299-301. The petition's date was October 28, 1778.

the "greatest want." In a letter of August 8 Proctor announced that the flour had arrived; and he suggested that he sell it on commission.⁹

The Massachusetts trade, for geographical reasons, was confined chiefly to these routes: (1) from the Connecticut Sound ports by boat; (2) from Northeastern Connecticut by land across the line (not very extensive apparently); (3) from Connecticut River towns upstream to Springfield and vicinity; and downstream by way of the Sound.¹⁰ It is probable that most of the trade was carried on by the water routes, and that the Sound traffic was often seriously interrupted by British ships.

Practically all of what has just been said about trade with Massachusetts can be applied equally to that with Rhode Island. Here, too, much evidence shortly will be adduced to show Rhode Island's serious plight and her desperate need of foodstuffs which were permitted to be imported from Connecticut.¹¹ Trade with Rhode Island likewise involved those districts of Connecticut most accessible. These were: (1) the contiguous area in southeastern and eastern Connecticut; and (2) the port towns of the Sound and larger rivers which could ship goods easily by water.

Trade with New York was very greatly affected and altered by the tide of military events. In the first period of the War, in 1775-76, when the Boston area was the chief locale of fighting, trade with New York meant chiefly trade with New York City and along fairly normal lines.

⁹ James Backus, Business Correspondence.

¹⁰ William Ellery of Hartford, for example, dealt with Massachusetts merchants such as David Sexton of Deerfield and Benjamin Jepson of Boston, William Ellery Account Book, pp. 78, 102.

¹¹ See Chap. XXI.

One finds Nathaniel Shaw, for instance, asking Peter Vandervoort, prominent New York merchant,¹² to dispose of large shipments of molasses and cocoa which Shaw had on the sloop Macaronia. In return, Shaw voted 500 weight of powder, 1500 flints, and 1800 weight of lead.¹³

When the fighting shifted to the New York City area, and the British wrested control of the city and its environs from the American Army, legal trade with the city stopped. As it will be shown later, however, much illicit trade went on between southwestern Connecticut and New York City.¹⁴ The chief New York State-Connecticut trade from late 1776 to the end of the war was shifted northward to routes earlier referred to which ran from such Connecticut towns as Hartford, Middletown, and Danbury to Newburgh, Fishkill, Rhinebeck, and other Hudson River points. In fact, the inland routes for reasons of safety, became very important. Incidentally, many goods from Massachusetts, including tents and clothing, and from Rhode Island, including horses and salt, were shipped across Connecticut to New York.¹⁵ Since Washington's army, or a part of it, was encamped on the Hudson for seven years or so, the business of sending supplies to it from Connecticut constituted, in a sense, a huge trade; which has already been considered. Apart from this, a considerable civilian trade did exist. Connecticut officials, as was mentioned earlier, were bombarded with appeals for ending the embargo; and when that

¹² Vandervoort later moved to Hartford.

¹³ Rogers, p. 27.

¹⁴ See Chap. XXI.

¹⁵ East, pp. 80, 86.

failed, with petitions for permits, which were widely granted. New York, in part, was able to send goods for Connecticut foodstuffs, but much cash had to be sent also. The balance of trade definitely favored Connecticut.¹⁶

So much has been made of the desperation with which New Yorkers pleaded for permits to obtain Connecticut food that it is refreshing to discover that occasionally the shoe was on the other foot. For example, Nathaniel Shaw wrote Governor Clinton on November 30, 1778 and enclosed a letter of Governor Trumbull requesting that Shaw be granted liberty to buy and bring out two hundred barrels of flour.¹⁷

The legal routes of the trade of Connecticut and New York were all overland, and included: (1) from western Connecticut through Danbury and other points to lower and mid-Hudson Valley points and back; (2) from northwestern Connecticut (Litchfield, Norfolk, Canaan, etc.) to middle and upper Hudson Valley points, including Albany. The illicit routes, also heavily traveled, fell into two chief categories: (1) from Connecticut Sound ports, inlets, and coves across the Sound to Long Island; and (2) overland from Fairfield County into the environs of New York.

Commercial relations with New Hampshire were very slight, as might be expected from the geographical relationship of the two states. Several embargo permits, such as those below, were granted to New Hampshire citizens, but the occurrence was rare.

¹⁶ Alexander Hamilton in 1782 estimated New York's imports from New England at about £50,000 yearly, and New England's from New York at £30,000. New York paid the balance in gold obtained from military expenditures there. East, p. 81.

¹⁷ Clinton Papers, IV, 319.

[1777] On motion &c. permitted James Underwood, of Litchfield in N. Hampshire, to purchase in Fairfield county &c. 2234 lb. flax.¹⁸

[1777] A permit was given to Saml Coburn for 100 lb. wt of flax, and to George Coburn for 200 lb. wt of flax, and to one Blanchard for 200 lb. wt of flax, to be by them carried out of this Colony, to N. Hampshire, the embargo notwithstanding.¹⁹

When some one hundred or so New Hampshire troops were quartered for a time in 1779 at New London, the Council ordered that the State commissary "issue refreshments" to the men in order to allay discontent,²⁰ caused probably by the superior provisioning of the Connecticut soldiers. Nathaniel Shaw seems to have carried on business dealings in the revolutionary era with at least one New Hampshire merchant, James Keith of Portsmouth.²¹ By and large, however, there is every indication that trade with New Hampshire was insignificant.

Trade with the states south of New York ranked as relatively unimportant in volume, frequency, and significance. New Jersey seems to have had almost no commercial connections with Connecticut.²² Pennsylvania had more contact, but not a large amount. Nathaniel Shaw occasionally dealt with Philadelphia merchants chiefly because some ships in which he was interested paid calls at Philadelphia while en route to or from more distant ports, especially in the West Indies. Thomas and Isaac Wharton

¹⁸S. R. I, 170.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 177.

²⁰S. R. II, 216.

²¹Nathaniel Shaw. Letters, 1776.

²²In the Clinton Papers, III, 300, is a reference to a deal between some New Jersey people and Connecticut men whereby the former would send wheat in return for salt from Connecticut.

and Frances Lewis of Philadelphia handled goods for Shaw.²³

Only two of the southern states, North and South Carolina, had much commercial intercourse with Connecticut. From the Port of Roanoke (North Carolina) records one finds evidence of occasional visits from Connecticut vessels. For example, in the period July 10, 1775 to July 5, 1776 these Connecticut ships cleared from the Port of Roanoke:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Ton- nage</u>	<u>Crew</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Owner(s)</u>	<u>Destination and Cargo</u>
July 22, 1775	<u>Sally</u>	Allen [Naltets] [?]	45	5	New London	Thomas Wilson	St. Croix--corn, peas, beans, shingles, staves, headings, herring
July 31	<u>Diamond</u>	Peter Whitney	25	4	New Haven	Increase Bradley, J. Peter Whitney	New York--shingles
Oct. 26	<u>Grampus</u>	Azor Booth	30	5	New Haven	David Lewis	Barbados--beef, corn, herring
Apr. 17, 1776	<u>Sibyl</u>	James Thomas	40	4	New Haven	Samuel Bird	Dominica--corn, peas, beans, shingles, staves, headings
June 5, 1776	<u>Lucretia</u>	E. Humphry	22	4	New Haven	Abel Buel	Antigua--shingles, staves, headings ²⁴

Besides this evidence, the Connecticut Gazette at long intervals recorded news of ships to or from North Carolina. For instance, in 1778 Captain Egleston arrived at New London from Cape Fear, in February; Captain Fitch, from "North Carolina," in March; and Captain Anable, from New Bern, in

²³ Rogers, p. 282. In 1776 Shaw had business correspondence with "N. & J. Wharton" of Philadelphia at least three times. Nathaniel Shaw Letters, 1776.

²⁴ James Iredell, Sr., Port of Roanoke, 1771-1776.

November. Sometimes the cruise was abruptly terminated as was one in 1780 when Captain Joseph Bell, in a sloop from New London bound for North Carolina, was taken off the Carolina coast and carried into New York.²⁵

There was a very limited trade, also, with South Carolina. These entries show something of its nature.

Capt. Thomas Chester of Groton, arrived here [New London] since our last, in a Sloop from So. Carolina, with a Cargo of Rice, indigo, &c.²⁶

By Capt. Goff Phipps, of this place [New Haven], arrived at Stonington, a few days since, in 12 days from Charlestown, South Carolina....²⁷

In 1779 Nehemiah Hubbard of Middletown organized a voyage to Charleston to obtain badly-needed rice.²⁸ By and large, however, the total trade with the Carolinas was quite small.

Connecticut's interstate trade assumed an important part in the economic life of the state during the Revolution. Much of this interstate commerce consisted of supplying the Continental forces stationed in other states, and of providing relief in foodstuffs for suffering inhabitants of neighboring states. Yet a considerable amount of private trade basically in the pre-war pattern persisted. Connecticut had a large interstate trade with only three states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York, and carried on a small, irregular, and insignificant trade with the other states. The trade by water with all states was fraught with

²⁵ Gazette, February 27, March 13, November 20, 1778; April 21, 1780.

²⁶ March 28, 1777.

²⁷ Journal, May 19, 1779.

²⁸ East, p. 97.

great danger due to British naval preponderance, and much interstate trade was of necessity, therefore, diverted to land routes. Illicit trade with neighboring states was rather large, but there is no reason to believe that it compared on the average in volume with the legal trade.

CHAPTER XXI

Economic Regulatory Legislation and Its Enforcement, 1776-1781

I. Embargoes

A surprisingly large amount of regulation of trade was attempted in Revolutionary Connecticut. Attention will be given here to the more important types of regulation; namely, embargoes, prevention of hoarding and profiteering, and price control; and to the enforcement of the various laws.

It has already been seen that the embargo, as an instrument for preventing shortages and making adequate supplies available for the civilians and the armed forces, was employed from early colonial times.¹

The first year and a half after the Declaration of Independence saw a continuance of the embargo program with some expansion involved. Not only were a series of acts passed, but the Governor and Council were given blanket authority to impose an embargo upon the export of any article during the recess of the legislature.² By legislative acts of October and November, 1776 a long list of items could not be exported by land or water, including such basic things as wheat, rye, corn, pork, salt, peas, beans, flour, all kinds of linen and woolen cloth; and by water, beef, live cattle, sheep, butter, and cheese. Exempt from control was the export of clothing and provisions to soldiers in the army.³ In November, oats, wool, flax, bar iron, beef, fat cattle, sheep, and swine

¹ See pp. 179-181.

² S. R. I, 10, 72.

³ Ibid., p. 12.

were added to the prohibited list; and, by a separate act, all West India goods, and New England rum.⁴ The latter acts were passed after a special legislative committee, under the chairmanship of Jabez Hamlin, had recommended such action.⁵ This general cycle of acts was completed by two acts in December, 1776. One laid an embargo upon all privateers and shipping except by individual permission from the Governor and Council. The other forbade the export of tanned leather and shoes, since a great scarcity of them had developed.⁶ A moderate number of exemptions were granted to individuals. For example, in the month of February, 1777, about fifteen to twenty special permits were granted for export of embargoed goods. Most of the permits were given to persons from neighboring states.⁷

The impact of the embargoes upon the shipowning class was severe. Early in the War a group of prominent shipowners, mostly from Hartford, petitioned the general assembly for exemption from taxes on their idle vessels. They pointed out that their ships had been laid up by the embargo even though large quantities of goods were on hand for export and had to be stored at great cost. The vessels would be a total loss if the war continued long. They asked, therefore, if it were reasonable for them to pay taxes upon said vessels which had "become useless Lumber." The list of signers comprised Samuel Oloott, John Chenavard, George Burr, William Bull, Samuel Marsh, Daniel Goodwin, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Samuel

⁴S. R. I, 71.

⁵Hinman, p. 574.

⁶S. R. I, 123-124.

⁷Thirteen specific grants are listed; and on February 6 there were "Sundry granted," but no exact number was given. S. R. I, 166-186, passim.

Kilbourn, Robert Branthwaite, Peter Boyd, and Daniel Hinsdale. Despite the importance of these petitioners, their plea was rejected.⁸

The embargo acts of 1776 caused much concern and resentment in neighboring states, especially New York. On December 24 the New York Committee of Safety wrote to Trumbull about the concern over the new acts.⁹ About a month later, Philip Schuyler wrote Trumbull to the effect that:

Great discontents prevail in every part of this State at a[n] [embargo] law which is said to be past in Connecticut.... They consider such a law under the present situation of this State as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall them....¹⁰

Governor Trumbull replied in a sympathetic but firm vein. He declared that the embargo acts had had a "very salutary effect," which would be even greater in the future. Price fixing, too, was helpful. He pointed out that it was very little trouble to get permits from the Governor. Moreover, the law did not prevent articles from being brought into or through Connecticut.¹¹ In other words, Connecticut fully intended to stick by its embargo and price laws. Schuyler's reaction was interesting. He noted that New Yorkers held no objections to the price control bill, but the "clamours" against the embargo continued very pronounced. He felt that the embargo law would produce worse disorders than the evils

⁸A. R. W., I, Doc. 255.

⁹American Archives, Ser. III, 1407.

¹⁰M.H.S.C., LXII, 15. The people of the Mohawk and Hudson Valleys were cut off from their normal source of supplies at New York and were forced to rely upon New Haven and vicinity for West India goods and salt. Andrew M. Davis, "Trials of a Governor in the Revolution," Proceedings of Massachusetts Historical Society, XLVII, 131-141.

¹¹A. T. P., XXVI, 111-112.

it was aimed at correcting.¹² Connecticut did stand firm, however, and New Yorkers were forced to apply for permits. In a letter of March 16, Schuyler told Trumbull that the flood of complaints continued, and that the time and expense involved in getting permits constituted the largest grievance.¹³ One just could not satisfy those New Yorkers, so Trumbull and fellow Connecticut leaders must have thought!

The Springfield Convention of July, 1777, recommended to the respective states that they fashion their laws so as not "to prevent the free transportation of any articles that can be spared from their respective States to supply the inhabitants of any of the other States...."¹⁴ No further important embargo legislation was undertaken, however, until May, 1778.¹⁵

From May, 1778 through May, 1780 several significant embargo laws were put into effect; and, in general, the principle of the embargo was tenaciously supported, officially.¹⁶ Perhaps the chief innovation of this period came in the Act of April, 1779 which authorized the removal

¹²Schuyler to Trumbull, February 17, 1777, A. T. P., XXVI, 113-114.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴S. R. I, 604-606.

¹⁵An alteration was made in October, 1777 to cover transportation of goods through the State and to liberalize exports when salt was to be imported. S. R. I, 414-415.

¹⁶The May, 1778 act was almost the same as the acts of October and November, 1776. S. R. II, 17. There is evidence that Governor Trumbull disliked the embargo policy. In his opening speech to the general assembly at the May, 1778 session the Governor declared "It appears to me reasonable to think it operates in a manner that is not salutary to the State, altho it is easy to mention some difficulties which may arise from setting it altogether free." A. T. P., XX, Doc. 178. The statement is somewhat ambiguous, however, and may have been motivated largely by political considerations.

to a secure place of any stores of goods wherever located which appeared to be destined for illegal export. All costs involved in the process were to be assessed upon the owner. Any person who nevertheless exported goods illegally was liable to punishment by confiscation of all articles involved in the transaction, including the team and wagon.¹⁷

In May, a very detailed act covering the bonding, inspection, and general oversight of goods exported under permits was made law.¹⁸ This was followed by an act whereby the towns were directed to appoint a "suitable number of active, vigilant and discreet men, who should be called Inspectors of Provisions" whose duty it was to intercept any embargoed goods being transported illegally through the town. Special notice was taken of the inhabitants living near Greenwich, between the American and British lines, who customarily purchased embargoed provisions in Connecticut, and later conveyed these goods from their dwelling to the British. A strict licensing system was set up to stop this evil.¹⁹

The final act of importance in the 1778-80 period was that of May, 1780 which took cognizance of the abuse of the permit system and of the more pressing need of the army for supplies. All old permits were abrogated, and all new permits issued by the Governor were to contain more restricted time limits.²⁰ This and the preceding acts of this period represented attempts to bolster the embargo and to render it more

¹⁷ S. R. II, 222-223.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 267-271.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 450-452.

²⁰ S. R. III, 13-14.

effective by eliminating various abuses. The very passing of these acts, however, betrayed the growing and serious attempts to evade the embargo.

The steady rain of protest against the Connecticut embargo by neighboring states continued to pour down through 1778, 1779, and 1780. From Rhode Island came frequent and more vigorous demands for discontinuance of the embargo. Rhode Island apparently had a genuine hardship situation which was worsened by her neighbor's embargoes.²¹ A letter from Governor Greene of Rhode Island to the Connecticut general assembly forcefully outlined the situation in January, 1779. He referred to the repeated requests made to Governor Trumbull for repeal of the embargo acts, which had been without effect. If Connecticut legislators were aware of the great distress of Rhode Islanders, it would not be necessary to trouble Connecticut with petitions. According to Greene, Rhode Island "at no period ever grew grain sufficient for [its] consumption." For two years the British had occupied one-third of the best lands. In addition, many farmers had been called frequently for military service. During the past July, one-half the available men were on duty so that much of the grain crop was entirely lost. In addition, there were some 2000 refugees from the British-occupied area encamped in the patriot-held part of the state. Truly it was a desperate situation! Two spokesmen, Jabez Bowen and President Manning, were being sent to describe further the "deplorable circumstances" and to ask for immediate export of needed goods from Connecticut to Rhode Island under

²¹ A. A. Giesicke, American Commercial Legislation before 1789 (New York, 1910), p. 124. In January, 1779 Greene reiterated in another letter to Trumbull: "And if the embargo in Connecticut is still continued against us we are under the melancholy apprehension of having numbers of our people perish for want of necessaries of life." M.H.S.C., LXII, 344.

such restrictions as seemed necessary.²² Rhode Island also filed a strong protest against Connecticut's embargo with the Continental Congress and a Congressional resolve was passed upon the subject.²³ In addition, Rhode Island prohibited the taking of livestock or produce into Connecticut in order to cut off the Connecticut engrosser.²⁴

Connecticut's willingness to help her neighbor was evinced in the prompt passage of a resolution providing that 7000 bushels of grain (rye and corn) could be purchased by Rhode Islanders in specified amounts in each of five counties.²⁵

The Records of the State reveal that a large number of petitions for export of embargoed goods to nearby states were granted from 1776 on. One has to turn, however, to the Archives to ascertain what proportion of petitions were denied. The following are fairly complete for the periods indicated:²⁶

²² A. T. P., IX, 16.

²³ Eliphalet Dyer, Oliver Ellsworth and Jesse Root to Governor Trumbull, February 11, 1779, M.H.S.C., LXII, 347. Journals, Congress, XIII, 130-152.

²⁴ Samuel G. Arnold, History of the State of Rhode Island (New York, 1860), II, 445.

²⁵ S. R. II, 187. New London County was the one omitted. The special legislative committee upon this problem considered requests from both Rhode Island and Massachusetts and recommended 7000 bushels for Rhode Island and 3000 for Massachusetts. The upper house concurred, but the lower house dissented. A. R. W., XIV, Dec. 19.

²⁶ A. R. W., XIII, index; XIX, index; XXI, index, XXIV, index.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Type of Petition</u> ²⁷	<u>Number Considered</u>	<u>Granted</u>	<u>Partially Granted</u>	<u>Rejected</u>	<u>Action Deferred</u>
Oct., 1778	To export goods	22	13	2	7 ²⁸	
Apr.-Dec., 1780	Export goods	24	5	4	15	
Mar.-Dec., 1780	To import goods	13	10		3	
May-Dec., 1780	To transport goods through the State	5	1		4	
Feb.-May, 1781	To export goods	8	1		5	2
Feb.-May, 1781	To import goods	5	3		2	
Feb.-May, 1781	To transport goods through the State				1	
Jan.-Feb., 1783	To export goods	4	4			
June-Feb., 1783	To import goods	13	9	2	2	

In May, 1779 the general assembly granted thirty-nine petitions for exception from the embargo in order to export goods to Massachusetts. This constitutes the largest single group granted at one session by either the general assembly or the Council. An analysis of these petitions reveals that nineteen Massachusetts towns or localities were represented, of which Martha's Vineyard, Rochester, Boston, Barnstable, Dartmouth, and Nantucket led in the number of petitions. The products to be purchased in and exported from Connecticut reveal eloquently what was critically short in Massachusetts and in surplus in Connecticut. These items were: corn and rye²⁹ --36 requests; pork--20; flour--6; beef--3; wheat--2; oats--1; flax--1;

²⁷In classification some cases are unclear. Where a person wished to import and export both, as in a few cases, whichever was to occur first is given as the determinant types.

²⁸Several of the most tragic cases were rejected. There was a tendency to deny all the unusual cases, however tragic.

²⁹Several petitions were granted for "rye and indian corn," or for "indian corn or rye," while others indicated one of the two. Hence all have been lumped together.

and "meslin"—1.³⁰ One can understand the process better by noting several grants.

This Assembly do grant liberty to John Ferguson, of Marthas Vineyard in the State of Massachusetts Bay, to purchase and export from this State to Marthas Vineyard aforesaid by water 45 bushels indian corn and two barrels of pork.³¹

This Assembly do grant liberty to James Church to purchase in this State forty bushels of indian corn and rye for Henderson Inches, Esq^r, and others of Boston committee for supplying the poor of that town, and transport the same, together with forty bushels of indian corn and eighteen bushels of rye already purchased for said committee, and ten bushels of indian corn purchased for Joseph Morrell, from this State to the State of the Massachusetts Bay for the persons and purpose aforesaid.³²

The fact that this entire group of petitions came from Massachusetts' sources indicated the grave situation in eastern Massachusetts in 1779. This held for the next year or two, as the coming of French troops to Newport caused a heavy drain upon supplies,³³ as already has been shown.³⁴

Much evidence exists that the embargo laws were violated frequently, despite the fact that nearly all embargo petitions of a legitimate sort were granted. One can assume that most of those disobeying the law did so deliberately, and that their cases would not have been considered worthy of exception to the law(s). Of course, there were also some cases of ignorance of the law. In any event, Governor Trumbull deemed it necessary to issue a proclamation. He asserted that despite the laws

³⁰S. R. II, 324-328. Most petitioners asked for two or more products.

³¹Ibid., p. 325.

³²Ibid., p. 326.

³³Davis, XLVII, 139.

³⁴See pp. 284-285.

which prohibited export of provisions out of Connecticut without special permit, many violated them.

I DO therefore hereby, and at the special desire of the general assembly, order and enjoin all persons that they strictly observe the laws aforesaid. AND I DO in the most peremptory manner require all officers whose duty it is to see that the said laws are strictly observed and kept, and to punish with the utmost severity all persons that they shall have violated the same.³⁵

These strong words, however, probably reflected better the feelings of the legislature than those of Trumbull personally. And even among the legislators there existed a predisposition toward free trade among the states. This came out in a resolve of May, 1780 which requested the Governor and Council "to correspond and agree with the governments of the neighboring States on terms of opening a free trade and transportation by land from one State to another" and empowered him to grant a general permission to export provisions by land to neighboring states from August 1 on, any embargo notwithstanding.³⁶ Apparently Governor Trumbull did issue a proclamation in favor of free trade,³⁷ but there is no evidence that it was implemented by any immediate action in Connecticut or the other states involved.³⁸

The opposite, in fact, seems to have been the case as an embargo was clamped upon export of butter, cheese, and all vegetables in July 1780, effective until twenty days after the next session of the general

³⁵ Gazette, March 1, 1780.

³⁶ S. R. III, 39.

³⁷ Clinton Papers, VI, 174-176.

³⁸ A resolve adopted at the Boston interstate convention of August, 1780 called for the repeal of all embargoes upon export of goods by land from one state to another. S. R. III, 562.

assembly.³⁹ This produced a sharp reaction in Wethersfield, the "onion capital" of the State. A petition signed by two justices, two selectmen, and twenty-six other inhabitants of the town stated that more onions were then growing in the vicinity than the American and French armies could possibly eat in twelve months! Moreover, under the present system only commissaries could purchase; and a Mr. Bunce, local storekeeper and commissary agent of the French, had set ruinously low prices. The onion growers, therefore, were caught in an unfair "squeeze" as all necessities were high priced. They asked for an end of this embargo and a fairer system of supplying the French Army.⁴⁰ The petition accomplished its purpose, at least in part; for the Governor, at the beginning of August, discontinued the embargo upon all vegetables.⁴¹

Export permits were sought for many reasons, of which one was in order to get clothing for the army. Windsor, for example, at the town meeting of March 27, 1781 voted to ask the Governor and Council for permission to export 1000 bushels of corn to Rhode Island for the purpose of obtaining hard money with which to obtain the town's quota of clothing for the Connecticut Line. Apparently the petition met with favor, for on April 3 the town appointed two men to go ahead in accord with the permit granted by the Governor and Council, and transport the 1000 bushels to Rhode Island, and procure there the hard money to buy linen cloth for frocks, shirts, and overalls to be delivered to Elijah Hubbard

³⁹ S. R. III, 129.

⁴⁰ A. T. P., XII, Doc. 106.

⁴¹ Gazette, August 4, 1780.

by May 10.⁴²

2. Hoarding, Profiteering, and Price Control

The problems of hoarding of scarce articles, charging excessive prices for them, trading with the enemy, and enforcing the acts concerning these practices caused Connecticut leaders untold amounts of effort, worry, unpopularity, and discouragement. Many aspects of these persistent problems already have been discussed, so that attention will be centered upon the overall picture and upon some lesser points not previously mentioned.

The preamble to the first act (1776) directed against engrossers or hoarders very nicely described public feeling against that class.

Whereas many are so abandoned and lost to all the feelings of humanity as to prey upon the bowels of their country in this day of public distress and struggle by endeavouring to engross many of the necessary articles of life, especially of such as are more immediately wanted for the comfort and support of our armies, whereby much extortion and oppression arises upon the poor and the soldiery....⁴³

Therefore, the legislature empowered the Governor and Council to seize whatever was needed by the army from the hands of the engrosser, and pay a just price as affixed by two appraisers.⁴⁴ This was only the first of a long series of acts concerning hoarding and profiteering.

For convenience of reference, the more important later acts dealing, chiefly or partially, with these problems are listed here.

⁴² Stiles, p. 403.

⁴³ S. R. I, 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

<u>General Assembly Session</u>	<u>Shortened Title of Act</u>	<u>Leading Provision(s) and Comments</u>
November, 1776	Act to prevent monopolies and depression ⁴⁵	Set prices on labor, basic foodstuffs. Provided for penalties and enforcement.
November, 1776	Addition to act to prevent engrossing	Gave local authorities power to seize hoarded goods for use of Army.
November, 1776	Act to prevent engrossing of salt	Seizure and sale of hoarded salt authorized.
December, 1776	Act to prevent monopolies by excessive prices ⁴⁶	Set prices upon even more items than November act, and provided for penalties and enforcement.
May, 1777	Addition to and alteration of act to prevent monopolies and oppressions	New and higher prices set for West Indies goods and other items.
August, 1777	Repeal of (all acts to prevent monopolies and oppression	Price control abandoned.
October, 1777	Act to encourage fair dealing and to restrain sharpers	Purchase of large quantities of specified articles without license prohibited. Sale also regulated.
February, 1778	Act to regulate prices of "labour, produce, manufactures and commodities"	Very comprehensive price-fixing of nearly all important items, as based on recommendations of New Haven (interstate) Convention.
February, 1778	Act to prevent illicit trade	Permit required to go to enemy territory. Procedure for seizure and condemnation of illegally imported goods described.
May, 1778	Act reviving two early acts to punish and prevent oppression	These acts repealed in December, 1778.
May, 1778	Act to regulate prices (of February, 1778) repealed	

⁴⁵ Directed against "monopolizers, the great pest of society, who prefer their own private gain to the interest and safety of their country," S. R. I, 62.

⁴⁶ Based on recommendations of Providence Convention. S. R. I, 97-100, 593-596.

<u>General Assembly Session</u>	<u>Shortened Title of Act</u>	<u>Leading Provision(s) and Comments</u>
October, 1778	Act repealing act for regulation of prices	Repealed Act of February, 1778.
October, 1778	Act to prevent monopolies and provide supplies	Elaborate rules for impressment of hoarded goods
April, 1779	Act altering act to prevent illicit trade	Since Long Island licenses abused, power of towns to issue licenses abrogated.
May, 1779	Act to prevent sharpening and engrossing ---	Buying of pork, beef, grain, meal, and flour restricted to make supplies cheaper and more available.
May, 1779	Act in addition to act to prevent illicit trade	Libelled goods defined very liberally for benefit of the "libellants."
January, 1780	Act against enhancing prices and destroying public credit	Heavy penalties prescribed.
January, 1780	Act of October, 1778 for preventing monopolies and providing supplies continued	
May, 1780	Act in addition to and altering act to prevent illicit trade	Detailed provisions concerning inspectors, seizure and condemnation of illicit goods, especially those from Long Island.
May, 1780	Act to commission armed boats to cruise against the enemy and suppress illicit trade	Up to twelve boats to cruise on the Sound
November, 1780	Act respecting appeals on act to prevent illicit trade	No appeals allowed from decision of County courts.
May, 1782	Act in addition to act to prevent illicit trade	Total prohibition of import of any goods manufactured in Great Britain. Procedure for trials of such cases described. ⁷⁷

The policies of the general assembly were influenced by a variety of factors, and sharp changes occurred as may be seen from the table above. The sudden shifts in policy were caused in large part by recommendations from Congress or from interstate conventions, although the obvious failure of certain laws also hastened their abandonment.

The impetus for the regulatory actions came, fundamentally, from the towns of the State. An early example of this was afforded by the tavern-keepers and other retailers of rum. In an open letter of June 1, 1776 to the editor of the Courant, a spokesman for the group stated, in part:

Among the many exorbitant prices for the most necessary articles among us, none at present seem to appear with so threatening an aspect as the enormous rise of the article of rum, within the compass of a few months....

To discuss the situation, the inn-keepers and rum retailers of Hartford County were asked to meet at Ward Woodbridge's home in East Hartford. The meeting did take place, and the group voted not to purchase any rum at the present excessive prices for a period of four months, nor to sell any liquors at higher prices than usual.⁴⁸ A similar step was taken in New Hartford where specific maximum prices to be paid for rum were set.⁴⁹

In the town records one may find many resolves to abide by and enforce the various regulatory acts. Farmington at a regular town meeting on March 26, 1777 resolved to obey the law "for resisting Oppression" [of December, 1776] and to take effectual steps to bring violators "to condign Punishment."⁵⁰ Near the end of the War, in 1782,

⁴⁸ C. C., June 10, 24, 1776.

⁴⁹ July 8, 1776.

⁵⁰ Extracts, Farmington Revolutionary Records, pp. 11-12.

Farmington enthusiastically supported the idea of a county meeting to further measures to break up illicit trade. The meeting was held, as a town meeting of August 26, 1782 heartily approved of the proceedings of a County meeting held at Hartford on August 13. This included some very strong statements against illicit trade, and the appointment of a committee of inspection to detect and bring to justice those guilty of illicit trade.⁵¹ Norwich, New London, and Hartford town records likewise attest to a loyal spirit of cooperation on the part of most citizens and a desire to see the laws strictly enforced.⁵²

3. Public Opinion and Reactions

Public opinion on the subject of engrossing and profiteering was very pronounced, if the newspaper columns provided a fair index. In an article upon "monopolists" an anonymous writer declared, "Monopolists are of so base and duty a character that they deserve no place of public trust...." He observed that tea was supposed to be sold at 4sh. 6d. per pound, yet some merchants charged 10 shillings. For these profiteers he prescribed repentance and reformation.⁵³ Another writer, "MOBILITY," sent a curt note on the bread and flour shortage.

THIS country has been reduced to the brink of ruin by the infamous practices of Monopolizers and Forestallers. They have lately monopolized the STAFF of LIFE.

⁵¹ Extracts, Farmington Revolutionary Records, pp. 37-39. The Courant for August 20, 1782 gives the official report of the County meeting which was signed by Samuel Talcott, chairman, and Benjamin Henshaw, clerk.

⁵² Extracts, New London Revolutionary Records, p. 22; Extracts, Norwich, Revolutionary Records, pp. 29, 31; Extracts, Hartford Revolutionary Records, p. 15; Caulkins, Norwich, pp. 395, 398-399.

⁵³ C. C., August 12, 1776.

In France and Great Britain the people had sometimes resorted to violence to obtain bread, and the same thing could happen here, he warned.⁵⁴

The soldiers, particularly, often felt bitter about the high prices and the hoarding. A writer, who was either a soldier or a strong sympathizer with the soldiers, protested against the five- or six-fold increase in prices.

I ask the question, will your army continue to defend you in the field, when their wives and their children are famishing and crying for bread at home, through your intolerable oppressions?⁵⁵

A letter from "A Soldier" to the editor attacked the class, generally bachelors, who traveled about purchasing necessities and luxuries and "sell them at a most exorbitant price, thereby amassing more in a month than they ever honestly earned in a year, in the business to which they were bred."⁵⁶

Perhaps the most searching and comprehensive examination of the economic situation to appear in the papers was that of "Cato" whose articles ran through a number of weeks at the end of 1778. He believed that engrossing rather than a real shortage of foodstuffs had caused exorbitant prices. The harvest in 1776 had been generally good though not heavy. The profiteering, as Cato saw it, was confined to a few engrossing farmers; while the "midling farmers, tradesmen and day laborers" faced a bad economic future. The depreciation of the money

⁵⁴Packet, April 13, 1779.

⁵⁵C. C., November 25, 1777.

⁵⁶April 14, 1777. In an "officer's Address to Farmers," the officer, a major, declared "that as sure as there was a God he would leave the services if matters did not take a different turn; for his conscience forbid him to fight for those people who would stand by and see his family starve." C. C., January 20, 1778.

would inevitably fall chiefly upon the farmers who did not raise a substantial surplus—a remarkably accurate observation. Cato estimated that there were in Connecticut about one hundred to two hundred "engrossers" or "rum jockies" whose weekly profits sometimes ran to £200 or £300 weekly. He believed that a real scarcity of such items as iron, cattle, and leather existed; while army service had cut production of food considerably. Because of the slight margin of the small farmers and the high prices of necessities many of them might lose their farms to the "great bugs." Cato felt that the number of necessities which Connecticut could not supply was small. He was sorry to see the ladies "pine and grieve for the want of a little gauze, lace, [and] ... ribbons ..." but their mothers should have taught them the use of the spinning wheel. In conclusion, Cato expressed the view that the credit of the money still could be saved by a "large taxation" which would not greatly distress any one class. He advocated, also, a fair system of seizing goods from the "withholder."⁵⁷

On January 12, 1778 Thomas Hildrup, silversmith and jeweler of Hartford, gave notice in a sarcastic vein of his intentions to give up selling at reasonable prices as the practice was hurting his family and himself.

The public will be pleased to notice that for the future he shall fall in with their (at present) established maxim of three hundred per cent gentlemen in the Army and farmers excepted; from the first of which he will take but half and to prevent the last being offended by his unfashionable mode to count in dollars instead of shillings until their HIGH MIGHTINESS shall launch out their produce....

This notice reflected only too well the bitterness of an honest merchant

⁵⁷ C. C., December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 1777.

who was being pushed to the wall because he had kept his prices low. Hilldrup referred to the six-fold rise in prices whereby a dollar was charged for what formerly cost a shilling.⁵⁸ Moreover, the farmers were hoarding their produce, according to Hilldrup.⁵⁹

Another writer, "T.M." presented some very suggestive observations upon the price-fixing laws. He pointed out that three-fourths of the members of the legislature were farmers, and three-fourths of the remainder, lawyers and doctors. Hence, very high prices were set for corn, beef, and pork; but the merchant was limited to a tiny profit (4d. on a hogshead of rum retailing at 7sh. 8p.). T.M. asked in conclusion whether the act was not one of the majority farmers against the minority group of laborers, mechanics, and traders.⁶⁰ The laborer and mechanic certainly was put in a difficult spot, but most traders made good profits. As a matter of fact, many of the legislators had mercantile connections along with their agricultural activities. Yet "T.M.'s" question was a good one, and its inferences deserved attention.

Dissatisfaction with public officials grew during the later years of the war. Evidence of this feeling can be seen in the fact that even Governor Trumbull himself was charged with illicit trade. A story circulated about the State and received widespread credence. It stated that:

⁵⁸At that time six shillings were counted equal to one dollar.

⁵⁹C. C., January 13, 1778. Along this line is the protest of Barnabas Deane of Wethersfield who declared that the zealous enforcement of the illicit trade laws chiefly hurt the "Fair Trader." Estates of Tory merchants were confiscated, and the State sued patriot merchants who owed these Tories debts. This procedure caused Joseph Webb of Wethersfield, an honest and patriotic merchant, to go bankrupt. Martin, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁰C. C., May 26, 1777.

A Vessell that belongs to his Excellency the Governor, and, which was imployed in Carrying on the illicit trade with the Enemy, had been then lately taken coming from the Enemy, loaded with Goods, and that she was brought into One of our Ports for Condemnation.

The story became so widespread and embarrassing that Trumbull in January, 1782 demanded a full investigation. A special legislative committee thoroughly investigated the whole affair and discovered that a stranger had first told the story at Enfield tavern. After careful study, they concluded that there was not the least basis for any reports of illicit trade, and that the story probably was spread by "partisans and emissaries" of the enemy.⁶¹ The charges deeply hurt the Governor, and he referred to them in a speech to the general assembly on January 2, 1783. He asserted that he had not had one shilling's worth of English goods on hand since before the start of the War, and that he had ignored his private trade and neglected the cultivation of his lands.⁶²

The efficient and able commissary, Henry Champion, was also the target of attacks. It was charged that in the course of his work he had aided forestalling friends to make money and, in addition, had made excessive profits himself. Peter Bulkley of Colchester preferred the charges which were heard by the general assembly. Some twenty witnesses were heard, and their evidence was conflicting. Joseph Trumbull, one of the witnesses, strongly affirmed his belief in Champion's honesty, which may have influenced the verdict. In any case, the legislature found Champion not guilty of the charges.⁶³

⁶¹ A. R. W., XXII, Docs. 85-86. C. C., March 26, 1782. The committee consisted of Messrs. Silliman, Canfield, Southworth and Talcott of the lower house, and Oliver Ellsworth of the upper house.

⁶² A. T. P., XX, Doc. 342.

⁶³ A. R. W., IV, Docs. 193-218.

The significance of the impressive array of regulatory laws cannot be assessed without a consideration of the enforcements efforts and their success. The enforcement burden fell chiefly upon the town constables, the selectmen, and the local and county courts, although the general supervision and surveillance of the Governor and his Council assumed great importance too.

4. Form of the Violations

The violations of the laws took various forms. The embargo laws sometimes were disobeyed accidentally due to misinformation or lack of any information, and in such cases the violator usually was not punished. In more cases, though, the violation was deliberate. The largest amount of illicit trade apparently was made up of shipments of goods to and from Long Island and the New York City area. The job of preventing this rested chiefly upon the local constables and other officials of the towns on the Sound such as Greenwich, Stamford, and New Haven. The second chief violation involved the charging of excessive prices, often accompanied or preceded by hoarding of scarce goods.

A better conception of the nature of the illicit trade may be obtained from such data as the following.

[1777] A Mr. Fernandez, an Officer just released from Captivity by an exchange, informs me, that large and weekly supplies of fresh Provisions are brought into [New] York, which he was told by a Friend of ours, came from Connecticut.... It is most probable, the most Common mode of Conveyance is by Water, and that the Supplies are from those, who live on the Sound....⁶⁴

[1779] There are many Complaints against the Armed Whale Boats for plundering or carrying on Illicite Trade....⁶⁵

⁶⁴

Washington to Trumbull, April 12, 1777, W. G. W., VII, 402-403.

⁶⁵ Trumbull to Brig. Gen. Tyler, August 27, 1779. A. T. P., XX, Doc. 212.

[1780] While our Army in experiencing almost daily want, that of the enemy at New York is deriving ample supplies from a trade with the adjacent States of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, which has, by degrees, become so common, that it is hardly thought a Crime.⁶⁶

[1780] The Trade to Long-Island, has been much talk'd of-- it is now in every Body's Mouth.... The Legislature of this State ... have enacted severe penal Laws to suppress it.... I am sorry to say, the diabolical Trade still stalks on with gigantic Pace.... The men who are pursuing the illicit Trade are well known....⁶⁷

This anonymous writer goes on to say that some men posing as refugees from Long Island also smuggled illicit goods back and forth. In fact, there existed a Long Island-New York City group on one side, obviously loyalists, and a Connecticut group on the other which cooperated closely.

Lloyd's Neck, a British post on Long Island, became a rendezvous for Connecticut Loyalists and illicit traders. Even some Connecticut officials were in collusion. Other dodges included the procurement of permits from Congress to bring out goods under false pretenses, and the misuse of whaleboats for illicit trading.⁶⁸

Long Island Sound was the center of the illicit or so-called "London" trade, which extended from the Thames River to the Shrewsbury River in New Jersey. The trade generally followed this pattern. British goods

⁶⁶Washington to the President of Congress, November 7, 1780, W. G. W., XX, 314.

⁶⁷Gazette, September 15, 1780.

⁶⁸Ibid. It must be borne in mind that officially the British Government strongly opposed the illicit trade between Americans and British, or British Tory sympathizers. The British position for enforcement of Navigation and other regulatory acts had helped precipitate the War. Hence, in consistency, the British felt compelled to try to enforce the Prohibitory Act. A real effort was made despite the collusive activities of some British officers. Oscar T. Barck, Jr., New York City during the War for Independence (New York, 1931), p. 135.

were purchased in New York City, often ostensibly for Loyalists. The goods were carried to Long Island, smuggled across the Sound to Connecticut, and exchanged for badly-wanted provisions.

All kinds of devices were employed to expedite the illicit trade. Some refugees from Long Island misused their special permits to return to Long Island to take or get specified articles, and did business "on the side." Sometimes, also, they were robbed by predatory marauders who then sold the loot at high prices. Various forms of collusion became highly developed. For example, owners of Long Island stores "planned" to be robbed, and owners of boats often "permitted" themselves to be captured. The whaleboat men might be considered the chief villains of the whole play as they often used their intimate knowledge of the Sound and its people to grow wealthy on illicit trading although they were supposed to be enforcing the law. Port Jefferson, Long Island, was a favorite base of operations for illicit traders.⁶⁹

Some of the illicit trade followed roundabout routes. Governor Trumbull wrote Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts that some of the boats coming from Martha's Vineyard and other Massachusetts points under pretense of getting supplies were actually trading Connecticut goods with the enemy.⁷⁰

Not all the illegal trade was done by water routes as an important portion of it went overland to and from New York. Colonel John Mead, of Greenwich, in a letter to Andrew Adams, Speaker of the lower house,

⁶⁹ Frederic G. Mather, The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut (Albany, 1913), pp. 202, 209-214.

⁷⁰ A. T. P., XX, Doc. 272.

gave a very detailed picture of operations along the border in the winter of 1779-1780. He asserted that more fat cattle had been driven out of the State in the past two or three months than in any similar period of the War, although our scouts had seized many. When the local farmers near the lines were questioned, they reported that some cattle had been stolen; but they did not seem at all worried. Despite their frequent "losses", the farmers had hard money to buy more stock. Although the circumstantial evidence against them was strong, the local courts could get nowhere in prosecuting them. The procedure employed to outwit the town authorities was to hire as intermediaries "worthless persons" who would drive the cattle across the lines. Since in some places it required only twenty minutes to drive the cattle within British lines, the pernicious trade was extremely difficult to break up. Mead had a report from a reliable friend that the markets at New York were crammed with sheep and cattle from the Greenwich area. Yet, in Greenwich where many citizens were clamoring for enforcement of the law, almost nobody would accept responsibility as a law-enforcement official.⁷¹

The situation along the New York-Connecticut line was complicated by the depredations of the "cowboys" and the "skinners." The former group was made up of British refugees who especially busied themselves stealing cattle from farmers of the vicinity and driving the cattle to New York. Hence, the nickname "cowboys." The "skinners," although theoretically American sympathizers, were actually unscrupulous marauders who robbed and looted partisans of both sides.⁷²

⁷¹ A. R. W., IV, Doc. 272.

⁷² Lydia and Margaret Holland, Greenwich Old and New (Greenwich, 1935), pp. 77-78.

5. Problems and Extent of Enforcement

The enforcement of the regulatory laws became increasingly difficult because so many groups were engaged in illicit trade. Tories, some Patriots, British soldiers, American soldiers, and camp followers of both armies, all violated the laws.⁷³ When investigations were pushed, friends of the enforcement officials frequently were found to be involved. Hence, a thorough execution of the law would "step on too many toes."⁷⁴

The extent of illicit trade and of profiteering was great, yet constant attempts were being made to prevent these offenses, and to punish those guilty of them. Jabez Fitch, for example, who was in charge of several boats cruising on the Sound against the British and illicit trade, reported to the Governor in the summer of 1782 that the patrol boats had seized so many illicit trading boats with their owners and crews that the trade had nearly stopped. The culprits were bound over to their own town to be held for trial.⁷⁵

The proceedings of the county courts provide as good a source as is available as to what punishment was meted out to offenders against the regulatory laws. Windham County may serve as a sample.

⁷³ These groups would be classified in modern terms as the "black marketeers."

⁷⁴ Barck, pp. 134-135. Many "would-be" patriots undoubtedly thought of their trade merely as "turning an honest penny," and utterly failed to grasp the serious implications of it.

⁷⁵ M.H.S.C., LXIII, 372. Benjamin Tallmadge, in command of light infantry in the same area reported taking strict measures to guard the coast and "prevent the frequent & growing Commercial Intercourse with Long Island." Already his men had taken several boats returning from Long Island. Tallmadge to Washington, January 4, 1783. Tallmadge Papers, 4, Doc. 43.

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Windham County Cases, 1777-1782

<u>Session</u>	<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Judgment</u>
Dec., 1777	Peter Chandler	Twice drove out of the State fat cattle, hogs, and sheep and sold in enemy territory	No further action
Dec., 1777	Nehemiah How	Violating act to encourage fair dealing and restrain sharpers and oppressors	Guilty (December session). Given review. Not Guilty (February, 1779). Ordered pay costs of £179:2:4.
Dec., 1777 and Feb., 1778	Benjamin Hayward (of Woodstock)	Purchasing 80 fat hogs contrary to law	Guilty. Ordered pay fine £120 (twice value) plus costs. Allowed review at next session. No further action found in records.
Feb., 1778	James Flint (of Windham)	Violating "law against oppression"	Not guilty
Dec., 1779	Jacob Dresser, Jr. (of Killingly)	Violation of law to prevent sharpening	Continued. No further record of action.
Dec., 1779	Samuel Chandler (of Pomfret)	Violation of law to prevent sharpening	Guilty. Ordered pay fine £82 10sh. plus costs. Allowed review. No further record found.
Aug., 1780	Anasa Sessions (of Pomfret)	Driving sundry hogs and oxen out of state	Not guilty
Dec., 1780	John Boardman	Export of two hogsheads wheat contrary law	Guilty. Fined £42. Allowed review. No further record of action.
Dec., 1780	Levi Johnson (of Windham)	Driving 60 sheep out of State	Guilty. Fined £9 plus costs. Allowed review. No further record of action.
Dec., 1782	Archibald Dorrance (of Voluntown)	Violation of embargo act. Drove out 26 "fat swine."	Not guilty. Ordered pay costs of £19:14:3.

It is obvious, in first place, that the total of ten cases for a five-year period is small. Not one of the ten defendants suffered imprisonment, and only five were found guilty and fined. Moreover, there are reasonable grounds for doubt that all of those adjudged guilty actually paid the fines levied. Violation of the embargo laws made up the largest category of cases, five out of ten.

In New London County Court, also, very few cases of violation of regulatory laws were presented--only five in the period from November, 1781 through June, 1783. Every case involved illicit trade with the enemy. Two of the defendants were found not guilty, and dismissed on payment of costs. Another was judged guilty at the June, 1782 session; but, upon a review in June, 1783, decision was reversed. The fourth case, involving the prominent Nathaniel Wales of Norwich, saw a judgment of "guilty," but no further record of any action can be found. Only in one case did the law show its teeth. At the June, 1782 sessions Abner Ely of Lyme was found guilty of importing British goods from Long Island. His case was continued, and in February, 1783 he again was declared "guilty." He failed to appear for sentence so a writ was issued against him and his bond of £300 was declared forfeited.⁷⁷

By and large, the county courts could not have exerted any large deterrent influence upon future violators of regulatory acts. Even when

⁷⁷ New London County. Record of Trials, XXV, November 1781-August, 1784, November, term, 1781, case 114; June, 1782, cases 183, 184, 187, 191; February, 1783, cases 61, 234; June, 1783, case 72.

punishment was inflicted, it was relatively mild.⁷⁸

The maritime courts, however, displayed much more activity and severity in dealing with such cases as fell within their jurisdiction. The Courant contained scores of notices of "libels," or intents of confiscation, of goods and boats seized in illicit trade. A typical notice went as follows:

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Hartford County, September 18, 1782

Public Notice is hereby given to all concerned, That a Libel is filed before the Hon. Jabez Hamlin, Esq, Judge of the Maritime Court for the county of Hartford, by George Stanley, of Wethersfield, in said county, against a Sloop called the Black Joke, of about 40 tons burthen, her tackle, apparel and cargo, consisting of Onions and Salt, seized at said Wethersfield, and said to be bound to New York, or other place within the enemy's possession, against the laws of this State. For the trial of the justice of said tenure a Maritime Court will be held at the Court House in Hartford, on the 8th day of October next, when and where all persons concerned may appear and show reason why the said Sloop, her tackle, apparel and cargo, should not be condemned.

By order of the Judge,
GEORGE WYLLYS, Register

The libel notices were most numerous in 1781 and 1782, although a number may be found in earlier years. A glance at the "libels" published in a single month, August, 1781, gives an excellent outline of the problem. In the August 14 issue four libels were listed all from East Haddam:

(1) wheat flour about to be sent to enemy, seized; (2) the same;

(3) tea and cloth illegally imported; (4) the same. For August 21 one

⁷⁸ Severe punishment was occasionally inflicted, however. John Clark of New Haven was imprisoned in Newgate Prison for over a year for importing goods from Long Island. Upon the petition of the selectmen of New Haven he was ordered released. A. R. W., XXI, Docs. 338-340. George Munro of Brookhaven, Long Island, was convicted by the New Haven County Court of importing illegally from Long Island a piece of cloth and a small amount of salt and was sentenced to eighteen months. After six months imprisonment he petitioned for release and upon payment of costs he was ordered released. S. R. V, 156.

case in Hartford County involving European goods from Long Island was included. On August 28 the reader would have come across two notices: (1) a case from Colchester of English goods from enemy territory; (2) a case from Hartford County of European goods from Long Island. There is good reason for believing that most of the goods "libelled" were condemned and confiscated according to law. Of course many of the "libels" did not involve "illicit" trade at all, but rather "prize" goods seized upon the seas by patriot privateers. Even so, a large number were plainly seized from violators of the embargo laws and reflect a triumph of law enforcement.

The general picture, however, came down to a widespread violation in all parts of the State of the various regulatory laws, and a spotty and mild enforcement of the laws. The basic reasons for the poor enforcement were weak central government, inadequate machinery of enforcement, and a sizeable hostile segment of public opinion.⁷⁹ The extent of disobedience cannot be exactly measured, but it definitely increased in the last year and a half of the war, say from the spring of 1782 to the spring of 1783. Nearly everybody felt that the war was over anyway so that they considered that the continuation of trade restrictions was unnecessary. After the signing of the preliminary articles of peace in 1782, Connecticut boats often were admitted to New York even without

⁷⁹ Governor Trumbull, for example, referred to a "Great Division of Sentiment ... in both Houses" upon the price fixing recommendations before them in January, 1780. Trumbull to Samuel Huntington, January 27, 1780, A. T. P., XI, Doc. 45. As is well known, Trumbull himself had little use for most of the regulatory laws. He stated this frankly to Washington in a reference to the "total difference of my sentiments" with those of the great majority of the assembly over the regulating act of 1778 being discussed at the May session. Trumbull to Washington, May 5, 1778, A. T. P., XXIX, Doc. 520. Oliver Wolcott believed such laws were foolish, and "a most hearty contempt" was felt toward the regulating acts by many Connecticut people. East, p. 205.

flags of truce, and British goods were sold openly twice weekly at
Norwich.⁸⁰

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⁸⁰ Barck, p. 135, based upon the London Chronicle of September 12-14, 1782 and Gaines, Mercury, April 16, 1783. It is possible that many of the goods were prize goods.

CHAPTER XXII

Revolutionary Foreign Trade

Although it is not the intention of this study to consider Connecticut's foreign trade in detail, brief attention will be devoted to it here.

The general pattern of Connecticut's foreign trade has already been sketched.¹ This pattern was violently dislocated by the impact of the war, and it never recovered its exact prewar shape. The vigorous British blockade was the main instrument in upsetting the normal course of foreign commerce, as was shown earlier.² In fact, foreign trade became largely a matter of blockade-running in which the risks were high. This letter of 1776 from Thomas Burch and Company of St. Eustatius, popular West India island destination of Connecticut vessels, to a Connecticut merchant, Thomas Mumford of Groton, vividly revealed the dangers at sea:

This and the neighbouring Islands are so infested with Men of War, that it is next to an impossibility for a Vessel coming here to avoid falling in with one or more of them; and we have the greatest anxiety for the fate of Capt. Munro.

Poor Jabez Perkins [of Norwich] bound for Demerara sprung his mast coming off the coast, and was obliged to bear away for these Island[s] and near Guadeloupe was taken by the Pamona man of War and carried into Antigua where we hear his Vessel and Cargo are condemned.³

Nathaniel Shaw, who had been very actively engaged in the colonial West Indian trade, in a letter to Colonel Joseph Trumbull, relayed a report

¹See Chaps. X and XI.

²See pp. 239-240.

³Asa Martin, p. 701.

from a Captain Chapman, who had just arrived from Guadeloupe, to the effect that many American ships already had been seized and carried into Antigua.⁴

These entries from the columns of the Courant reflect the ever-present risks of wartime commerce.

[June 1, 1779]

Last Sunday evening, Capt. Bunnel in a Schooner belonging to New Haven, arrived here in 10 days from St. Thomas's with a Cargo of Rum and Sugar.... Capt. Bunnel informs that Captain John Bulkley, belonging to Wethersfield, Capt. French from the western part of this State, and Capt. Brintual in the Sloop Wooster, from New Haven, are taken and carried into the West Indies.

[February 27, 1781]

Capt. Asa Benton, in a Schooner from this town, for the West Indies, is taken and carried into Bermuda.

Among Norwich foreign traders the losses also mounted high. In addition to Jabez Perkins, Elisha Lathrop, Jabez Lord, Hezekiah Perkins, Thomas King, Ebenezer Lester, and William Loring were captured.⁵

In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that privateering largely replaced the ordinary foreign commercial activities of Connecticut merchants. Where the line could be drawn between privateering and foreign trade, however, was difficult to say.⁶ Moreover, the privateers, through

⁴ Joseph Trumbull Correspondence, March 4, 1776. An idea of the losses involved in a capture may be seen in an affidavit filed by Michael Todd and John McCleave of New Haven, owners of the sloop Polly which was captured with 21 oxen, 3 horses, hoops and staves, 2000 bunches of onions, and some hay, corn, oats and provisions. The lost ship and cargo were valued at £806:19sh. 3d. Continental Congress 66, I, 105, 106, 109. Nathaniel Shaw reported naval losses of £1257:15:5 in 1776, and Titus Hosmer, £3034:19:2. Ibid., pp. 133, 144-145.

⁵ Caulkins, Norwich, p. 406.

⁶ Albion and Pope in Sea Lanes in Wartime, pp. 24-25 make a distinction between "letters of marque" ships and privateers. The former were armed merchantmen whose main business was normal foreign trade, but who were licensed to take prizes on the side. The privateer, however, had as its objective only the seizure of prize ships and goods.

their captures, brought to Connecticut markets many of the European goods so desperately wanted and, thus in part, performed the function of ordinary traders. No attempt will be made to differentiate sharply between privateers and traders; but rather, emphasis will be placed upon the routes traversed and the products exchanged.

The history of the revolutionary foreign trade of Connecticut is largely a story of what happened to her West Indian trade. The almost complete stoppage of direct trade with Europe did not matter so much because in colonial times that was unimportant anyway.⁷

Where were Connecticut ships going to and coming from? What were they carrying? The answers to these pertinent questions may be found in a study of entries and clearances at the two chief ports of New London and New Haven.

Unfortunately, Benedict Arnold's raiders burned the New London Customs House with all its records in the attack of September, 1781; but much information for New London can be culled from the newspaper files. The following table records the arrivals of ships at New London and Stonington as listed in the Connecticut Gazette for selected periods.

⁷ See Chap. XI.

<u>Date Published</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>At</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Cargo</u> (if listed)
Aug. 1, 1779	Capt. Uzzel Clark	----	N. L. ⁸	St. Croix	900 bushels salt rum
Sept. 5, 1779	Capt. Jeremiah Tryal	<u>Michael</u>	Stonington	St. Pierre	rum, molasses, coffee
-----	Capt. Goodrich	----	N. L.	Mariegalante	"much needed articles"
Oct. 3, 1777	Capt. Roland	----	N. L.	West Indies	1100 bushels of salt
Feb. 27, 1778	Capt. Egleston	----	N. L.	Cape Fear, N.C.	?
Feb. 27, 1778	Capt. Niles	----	N. L.	St. Eustatius	?
Mar. 13, 1778	Capt. Fitch	----	N. L.	North Carolina	?
Mar. 20, 1778	Capt. Williams	----	N. L.	West Indies	?
-----	Capt. Palmer	----	Stonington	Martinique	?
Nov. 20, 1778	Capt. Cornelius Anable	[sloop]	N. L.	New Bern, N.C.	?
Feb. 19, 1779	Capt. Thomas Chestor	<u>Hancock</u>	N. L.	Demararra	rum
?	Capt. Brown	[schooner]	N. L.	Curacao	?
May 5, 1779	Capt. Hezekiah Perkins	[sloop]	N. L.	Cape Francois	?
May 20, 1779	Capt. William Rogers	<u>Generous Friend</u>	N. L.	Martinique	?
Jan. 25, 1782	Capt. Subel Worth	?	N. L.	Port L'Orient, France	?
Feb. 22, 1782	Capt. Lawrence	[brig]	N. L.	Guadeloupe	?

⁸
N. L.—New London.

<u>Date Published</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>At</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Cargo</u> (if listed)
Feb. 15, 1782	Capt. Giles Sage	[schooner]	N. L.	Cape François	?
Mar. 1, 1782	Capt. Johnson	<u>Delight</u>	N. L.	Port-au-Prince	?
Mar. 15, 1782	Capt. —Jones	[schooner]	Stonington	St. Vincents ⁹	?

One of the principal products imported was salt. For example, on March 21, 1777 "Capt. Rennals arrived [at New London] from the West Indies with 1500 Bushels of Salt;" and on October 3, a Capt. Roland brought in 1100 bushels.¹⁰ The State chartered many vessels to procure salt from the West Indies.¹¹ In the early days of the war, powder, which was critically short, was also transported in quantity to New London.¹² Among such shipments received from the West Indies were those carried by Captain Joseph Packwood, who brought in ten tons of powder; and Captain Bigelow, who brought five tons. Incidentally, both ships were chased and nearly caught by the British frigate Corberus.¹³ Although Nathaniel Shaw found the West Indian trade sadly reduced, he did continue limited mercantile relations and was involved in powder shipments especially.¹⁴

⁹ This list makes no pretense at completeness, but is offered as indicative of the important routes and the chief products carried. The date listed in each case is that of the issue of the Gazette and usually not that of arrival of the ship.

¹⁰ The importation of salt continued. An entry of August 7, 1778, in the Gazette, for example, noted the arrival of 3000 bushels of salt.

¹¹ Middlebrook lists no less than eighteen vessels sent from New London to the West Indies in 1776 and 1777 to get salt. See his Maritime Connecticut, II, 7-9.

¹² Ibid., II, 5-6.

¹³ Gazette, August 2, 1776. Tightening of the British blockade and increased production within Connecticut caused imports of powder to decline greatly later.

¹⁴ Rogers, pp. 305-306. C. R. XV, 126, 222, 241.

For New Haven it is possible to give a more complete picture of the foreign trade because at least part of its records of entries and clearances is extant. For the purposes of this study the clearances in the year 1777 have been tabulated.

<u>Date Cleared</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Ton- nage</u>	<u>Crew</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Bound to</u>	<u>Cargo</u>
Jan. 1	<u>William</u>	Peter Bontecou	38	10	Isaac [Sears] John Lawrance	"Burdeux" [Bordeaux]	286 casks of flaxseed, 4 barrels pearl ashes, 400 weight of beeswax
Jan. 1	<u>Catherine</u>	William Davidson	49	8	Isaac Sears John Lawrance	Bordeaux	300 casks flax- seed, 32 barrels of pearl ashes, 11 packs whale- bone, 400 weight beeswax, stores
Jan. 11	<u>Polly</u>	Timothy Tuttle	50	7	Richard Cutler Timothy Tuttle	"Martineco"	1700 feet lum- ber, 8 horses, 10 oxen, 50 sheep and hogs, 30 dozen poultry 200 bushels corn 13 barrels fish
Jan. 23	<u>Lawrance</u>	Frances Johnson	60	7	Henry Mitchell [Mess Meselt Caldwell] [?]	Bordeaux	4000 feet lum- ber, 400 casks flaxseed
Feb. 28	<u>Sally</u>	Peter Bontecou	50	7	James Rice Peter Colt & Co.	Bordeaux	219 casks flaxseed
Apr. 14	<u>Sally</u>	John Sloan	30	5	James Gurley Joseph Howell	Surinam	10,000 feet lumber, 100 barrels fish
June 4	<u>Friend- ship</u>	Stephen [H]olger	30	5	?	"St. Martins"	42,500 feet lumber, 625 feet pine boards 1 box spermac- eti candles, 34 casks staves, 10 casks headings
Oct. 20	<u>Humbird</u>	Jeremiah Guild	20	6	Jeremiah Guild [?] Griffing Aaron Liming	"Martineco"	15,500 feet lum- ber, 4 barrels pork, 1 barrel beef, 2 casks bread, 1150 bunches onions 26 bundles cash

<u>Date</u> <u>Cleared</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Ton-</u> <u>nage</u>	<u>Crew</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>Bound to</u>	<u>Cargo</u>
Nov. 4	<u>Benjamin</u>	Samuel Howell	20	5		"Martineco"	18,000 feet lumber, 1 horse, 12 sheep and hogs, 4 barrels pork, 3 barrels beef, 13 dozen poultry, 5 casks bread, 600 bunches onions
Dec. 13	<u>Brandy</u>	Jeremiah Gillett	35	5	James Van Horn Ebenezer Gracy [?] Whittemore	"Martineco"	6500 feet lum- ber, 3000 bunches onions
Dec. 27	<u>Wild Irish-</u> <u>man</u>	William Miles	20	6	?	"St. Croix"	6000 feet lum- ber, 5000 hoops
Dec. 31	<u>Swallow</u>	Joseph Davidson	35	7	Edward Gibbs John Gibbs	"Martineco"	13,000 feet lumber, 22 horses ¹⁵

Twelve ships is a very small number of vessels to have cleared in an entire year for foreign ports, and it indicates all too clearly the severe curtailment of foreign trade characteristic of all Connecticut ports throughout the war. Seven of the twelve ships, incidentally, had been built in Connecticut, and five had been registered in the State. The slow state of trade continued in 1778 and 1779. In 1778 only eighteen ships cleared, of which fifteen were bound to St. Croix, the Danish Island, two to St. Eustatius, and one to Martinique. In 1779, through June 5, eighteen vessels left the port, of which thirteen spread sails for St. Croix and five for Guadeloupe. The increase in trade with the Danish Island was very marked.¹⁶ The greater frequency of sailings in

¹⁵ New Haven, Foreigners Outward.

¹⁶ Ibid.

1779 as compared with 1777, and 1778, would seem to verify the belief that the British blockade of the Sound grew less tight after the shift of major British military efforts to the South.

To complete the picture, a brief glance will be taken at the cargoes of several vessels coming from the West Indies. The sloop Three Friends, for example, made port on April 10, 1779 with a cargo consisting of 2160 gallons rum, 10 casks of sugar, and 2900 gallons of molasses--all from Guadeloupe. On June 15 Elijah Forbes brought the schooner Sally into harbor with 4500 gallons of rum from St. Croix.¹⁷ While the foreign trade of the port of New Haven, therefore, must be described as small in volume, it cannot be considered unimportant either to the people of Connecticut or to those of the West Indian Islands, who desperately wanted the foodstuffs and other surplus goods of the State.¹⁸

Despite great wartime hazards, Connecticut mariners carried to the West Indies such products as flaxseed, pearl ashes, beeswax, whalebone, lumber, hoops, staves, horses, oxen, sheep, poultry, corn, onions, fish, candles, pork, and beef. In return, they brought home chiefly molasses, sugar, and salt, just as before the war. The only important change, aside from the greatly reduced quantities, was that the exigencies of the war supplies situation made it necessary to concentrate, at times, upon the import of critically needed items, such as salt. The chief West Indian islands with which trade was conducted were the following: the Danish islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas; the French Islands of

¹⁷ New Haven, Foreigners Inwards.

¹⁸ In this connection Governor Trumbull received urgent requests for food from the West Indian island of Martinique and he proposed encouraging private enterprise to furnish the supplies, although he recognized the need of an armed escort. Trumbull to Washington, November 6, 1781, Sparks, III, 437-438.

Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Dominique; the Spanish Islands of Grenada and Hispaniola; and the Dutch Island of St. Eustatius. The entry of France, Holland, and then Spain into the war, in 1778, 1780, and 1781 respectively, complicated the situation enormously as the fluctuating tides of war largely determined where American ships could go. St. Eustatius, for example, was captured by Admiral Rodney in 1781, and at times the entire West Indian area was cut off by the British Navy and the seizure or blockade of French, Dutch, and Spanish ports.

A few vessels traded between Connecticut ports and South American ports, especially Surinam, Curacao, and Trinidad. Examples of ships trading with these ports already have been cited. These ships took southward lumber, fish, and various provisions, and brought back various tropical and European products. This entry in the Gazette is suggestive:

Last Monday, Capt. Tobacoda arrived here in a Sloop from Curacao, which Place he left the 22d of November... The Cargo of the above sloop is very valuable, consisting of Blankets, Duck, some Powder, &c.¹⁹

The Dutch island of St. Eustatius, a small rocky eminence, strategically located close to St. Croix, St. Christopher, St. Bartholome, Puerto Rico, and most of the other West Indian Islands, became a very important transshipment point. The Dutch made it a free port, and it had a thriving trade. A very large number of goods of European and (specifically) British origin were traded at the island for American goods. Much of the American powder in 1776 came from there, for example; and salt, too, was

funnelled in quantity through St. Eustatius.²⁰ A New London Gazette of October 17, 1780 was indicative: "Last Thursday a Ship from St. Eustatia, laden with about 6000 Bushels of Salt, besides West India Goods, arrived here." Nathaniel Shaw had established commercial relations with St. Eustatius merchants including the firm of Milner, Burch, and Haynes.²¹

A very limited amount of direct trade with friendly European countries went on. No great amount could be expected since there had been little in the prewar period. A large increase with friendly harbors might have occurred had not the British Navy exercised control of the seas for most of the war period. Also, the poor state of American credit seriously handicapped trading possibilities. An occasional ship went to or from France, and some got through the blockade.²² On April 16, 1778, for instance, Nathaniel Shaw noted that Captain Michel of the French ship Lyon, lately arrived at New London from France had almost finished the sale of his cargo.²³ After the conclusion of the Treaty of Alliance with France, trade between the countries naturally increased. In the last years of the war, French goods were occasionally advertised, as in the Courant by Selah Korton in April, 1778, and by James and Hezekiah Bull in October and November 1781. The Bulls, incidentally, offered Dutch and English goods as well.²⁴ As shown earlier, several ships cleared from

²⁰Jameson, pp. 682-688. British reaction to the situation was bitter: "In short, Yorke writes to William Eden in this same month of May [1776], St. Eustatius is the rendezvous of everything and everybody meant to be clandestinely conveyed to America." Ibid., p. 688.

²¹Nathaniel Shaw, Letters, 1776.

²²Margaret Martin, p. 38.

²³Rogers, p. 312.

²⁴C. C., April 7, 1778; October 23, November 6, 13, 20, 1781.

New Haven for Bordeaux, France.

Likewise, a small amount of commerce with Holland was carried on. Jeremiah Wadsworth seems to have been involved in this, and also Nathaniel Shaw. Actually, much of this was indirect trade via Boston or Philadelphia. Shaw apparently had a rather active account with John De Neufville and Sons, merchants of Amsterdam, but many of the goods came in through Boston.²⁵ One finds E. A. Austin of New Haven advertising tea from Holland for sale in the fall of 1782.²⁶ The next spring Jedidiah Huntington of Norwich congratulated his brother Andrew upon "the Arrival of the long expected Goods from Holland."²⁷

"European goods" in general were offered in Connecticut towns during the whole war period, and particularly during the latter half. No less than five advertisements offering European goods appeared in a single issue of the Courant, that of February 23, 1779.²⁸

At long intervals a solitary ship slipped into port from the neutral Scandinavian countries, as witness this report from New London in 1781: "Last week, the brigantine la Imprometeur Captain Pes, arrived here in 52 days from Bergen in Norway."²⁹

As a matter of fact, some British goods continued to find their way

²⁵ Martin, pp. 78-79, Rogers, pp. 328, 329, 333.

²⁶ Journal, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 1782.

²⁷ Jedidiah Huntington to Andrew Huntington, March, 1783, Jedidiah Huntington Letters, Vol. 3.

²⁸ Two of the merchants, James Lamb and William Imlay, specifically listed "British" goods for sale.

²⁹ Journal, October, 18, 1781. Barnabas Leane had an interest in a brigantine bound for Gottenburg, Sweden. Margaret Martin, pp. 38-39.

to New England sources, and vice versa, throughout the war, although this was strictly against the law on both sides.³⁰ In some cases, of course, the English goods advertised and sold represented prize goods seized by our privateers; but this was not always the case. Also, the British West Indian islands had desperate need of food supplies, since America was their normal sources. It is very likely, too, that some Connecticut food found its way via neutral ports to the British West Indies.³¹ By 1783 trade with Great Britain again had become important as the definitive Treaty of Peace was signed on March 20. During the year, New England imported some £200,000 worth of goods³² of which a sizeable portion undoubtedly went to Connecticut. A return to some degree of normalcy was well reflected in Peter Colt's advertisement of dry goods from London in the Courant for December 9, 1783.

³⁰ Ernest L. Bogart, Economic History of the American People (New York, 1937), p. 211.

³¹ A Captain Goodrich upon arrival at New London from St. Eustatius on January 9, 1778 reported that provisions were so scarce in Barbados that the inhabitants were close to starvation. Only the supplies slipped through from the American Continent had prevented wholesale desertion of the [British] West Indian islands. C. C., January 13, 1778.

³² Tryon, p. 59.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Coming of Peace

The year 1782 was, in a sense, a transitional one from war to peace, which at times seemed weighted on the grim, warlike side; and at other times, more on the peaceful side. Large requisitions for Continental supplies continued to be levied on the State, and heavy taxes were necessary to meet these obligations.¹ As the tide of war ebbed, illicit trade tended to increase, as already noted, so that various measures to check it were enacted.²

Although the British blockade of the New England coast had lost much of its earlier vigor and efficiency, it still constituted a significant danger. This is reflected in a petition by the town of New Haven asking that the frigate Alliance be sent to convoy a number of loaded ships from New Haven to New London. The Council moved that the Governor send a letter to Captain Barry of the Alliance with the request that he perform the convoy duty if reasonably possible.³

In the field of embargoes one may study advantageously the process of relaxation of economic controls attendant upon the coming of peace. This loosening of controls came rather suddenly and forcibly at the October, 1781 session of the general assembly. Previous to this date, for a long period, public sentiment against embargoes had been growing,

¹ S. R. IV, 8. This act, for example, involved raising £200,000 for Continental supplies. (January, 1782). A similar act is found in S. R. IV, 171 (May, 1782)

² S. R. IV, 107, 114, 161, 281.

³ S. R. IV, 244 (May 20, 1782).

and export permits had been granted with increasing liberality.⁴ Beyond this, the evasion of the embargo laws had been notoriously widespread for many months. In October, 1781, therefore, when a special committee under Benjamin Huntington's charge submitted a report to the general assembly advising the repeal of all embargo acts passed since June, 1777 in order to promote commerce, the embargo walls crumbled like those of Jericho.⁵ It is true that the legislators tacked on a few minor amendments, but the bill passed substantially as recommended under the title, "An Act for promoting Commerce." All embargoes instituted since June, 1777 were repealed, but a careful system of licensing and bonding of ships was set up to prevent trade with the enemy.⁶

The lifting of controls continued apace in 1782 with further legislation in January which repealed all embargoes imposed since October 1, 1776. It had been reported to the legislature, however, that after the repeal of the act of January, 1780, by the act of October, 1781, many live cattle and other produce had been driven over the border into New York and enemy hands. To prevent this, the pertinent paragraphs of the 1780 act were revived, and the loophole was plugged.⁷

An easing of the supply problem is reflected in another trade

⁴A special legislative committee had been appointed in May, 1781 to revise the embargo laws. Richard Law (upper house) and Stephen Mitchell and Captain Hillhand (lower house) were on this committee, but no action was taken upon their recommendations. The comment in the Gazette of the next fall deserves notice: "Previous to their Adjournment they repealed the Embargo Act, which has long been considered by the inhabitants of the eastern part of the State, as a great Grievance." Gazette, October 26, 1781.

⁵A. R. W., Ser. II, LIII, Docs. 25-26.

⁶S. R. III, 519-521.

⁷S. R. IV, 4.

relaxation act of the same session. The Governor and Council were authorized to sell or export to Havana or other foreign ports as much of the beef, flour, and other produce collected under recent taxes as they deemed prudent, as long as an adequate reserve was retained.⁸ In May, some backtracking toward greater regulation was done. The importation of any goods manufactured in England or her colonies was absolutely prohibited and condemnation of such goods was provided for.⁹

With the coming of the peace the few acts still in effect concerning exports or imports became dead letters. A proclamation by Trumbull issued at Lebanon on April 18 declared that due to "a favourable change of circumstances in our public affairs" restraints on trade between Connecticut and the Enemy had become unnecessary, especially in the matter of cattle, beef, and provisions. Trumbull concluded: "I DO therefore hereby declare any such Lines or Restraints to be terminated...."¹⁰

Statistics upon registrations of ships in the port of New Haven reveal, unmistakably, the revival of mercantile life in New Haven and all along the coast. In 1781 four ships were registered; in 1782, fifteen ships; and from January 24 to April 28, 1783, eight ships. The next twelve months (June 2, 1783-June 26, 1784), however, saw the flood gates of sea-borne commerce burst wide open, for some forty ships were registered, of which thirty were Connecticut-built.¹¹ The return to a

⁸S. R. IV, 24. In a similar vein, the Council on June 14, 1782 authorized commissary Ebenezer Bernard to transport supplies to any suitable markets for sale, which suggests a surplus of goods due to diminishing army needs. S. R. IV, 257.

⁹S. R. IV, 161.

¹⁰C. C., April 29, 1783; Journal, May 1, 1783.

¹¹Record of All Ships and Vessels Registered at New Haven.

more normal, peacetime pattern of activity was manifest.

On the supply front, a rather large amount of routine activity went on in 1782 and early 1783. Chauncey Whittlesey was again appointed Quarter-master General for the militia; and, from time to time, supplies were voted for the militia detachments stationed along the coast.¹²

Taxes were levied to help meet the State's large quota of supplies for the Continental Army. On May 27, 1782 one finds that the Council voted that rations be drawn for one hundred and forty teamsters for one month. These teamsters had been hired by Ralph Pomeroy for service with the United States.¹³

The supply business continued in an active sense to the very end; and even after news of the definitive peace arrived, it required several years more to clear up and settle all accounts. Supplying the State and United States troops, however, had ceased to be a real problem by the spring of 1783. On April 4 the Council spoke of the evacuation of the posts around Stamford, and the need of protection of the supplies left there.¹⁴ At the May session of 1783, the general assembly by official act, virtually accomplished the termination of the active supply effort. The Quarter-master General of the State was ordered to consult with the Governor and Council and to obtain their orders for the disposal of all "warlike Stores" on hand after the definitive treaty of peace was concluded.¹⁵

¹² S. R. IV, 182, 245.

¹³ S. R. IV, 249.

¹⁴ S. R. V, 104.

¹⁵ S. R. V, 123-124.

News of the conclusion of the preliminary peace treaty of January 20, 1783 already had been received in Hartford, as it was published in the Courant for April 1.¹⁶

Official concern about illicit trade persisted right down into the early months of 1783. The approach of peace convinced many traders that the laws on illicit trade either were or ought to be dead letters. Hence, illegal trade was flourishing in certain areas, as was pointed out earlier.¹⁷ As a result, the legislators made one final attempt to destroy the trade by enacting two additional laws. The first included a provision that all goods going to enemy territory by water or land were liable to seizure and condemnation. The second law ordered the town officials in the coastal towns to report any suspicious behavior immediately. In addition, any person convicted of illegal trade was deprived of his right to go to law or to hold a public office.¹⁸ On February 7 the Council requested Major Benjamin Tallmadge to report any misconduct by the armed boats which were cruising in the Sound supposedly trying to prevent illicit trading.¹⁹ After this, no more was heard of attempts to break up trade with British-held areas until the May session of the general assembly.

From a careful examination of the output of the general assembly and the Council of Safety for the year 1782 and the first few months

¹⁶ News of the definitive Treaty of Paris of September 20, 1783 was published in the Courant for December 9, 1783.

¹⁷ See pp. 359-361.

¹⁸ S. R. V, 21-22.

¹⁹ S. R. V, 94.

of 1783, one can characterize the economic record as one concerned chiefly with minutiae and trivia. There were scores of minor acts and resolves dealing with such matters as collection of taxes, forwarding of supplies, sale of confiscated estates, and measures against illicit trade. The sense of urgency noticeable in earlier years, however, was no longer apparent. One almost gets the feeling that the legislators were merely "going through the motions" while they looked ahead to days of peace and prosperity. Except for the two embargo acts and one or two acts on illicit trade, considered earlier, no really basic economic legislation was put through. The State was "coasting along," and waiting for peace.

From an economic viewpoint the war ended for Connecticut in May, 1783, when the general assembly repealed practically all of the economic regulatory laws. These specifically included:

An Act to compel the furnishing necessary Supplies and assistance to the Quarter Master General and Commissary General of Forage of the Continental Army.

An Act more effectually to prevent Illicit Trade and the Several Acts made in addition thereto,

An Act to compel the furnishing Provisions and necessary Supplies to the superintending Commissary of Purchases, and their Assistants in this State,

An Act for securing Boats and other small Craft for preventing any Persons going out of any Harbour River or Creek with such Craft without License,

An Act for promoting Commerce, and all the Acts repealed by said Act....²⁰

To all intents and purposes, however, public opinion had already repealed the acts months earlier when peace was seen as an imminent certainty.

Conclusions

Local trade was the basic type in colonial Connecticut. It involved, in a general way, most of Connecticut's citizens who displayed the typical Yankee penchant for trading. Despite the self-sufficient nature of the average household, most Connecticut farmers had some surplus produce to exchange for needed manufactured goods and tropical products. Barter trade was still very prevalent at the local level due to the crying shortage of specie. The "merchants," in the strict sense, constituted only a small group, but in this group were found many notable figures in Connecticut's history, including such men as Jonathan Trumbull, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Nathaniel Shaw, Benedict Arnold, and Roger Sherman. The most important trading markets of the late colonial era were found in New Haven, Middletown, Hartford, Litchfield, Windham, Norwich, and New London. In general, real specialization in selling had not yet appeared, even in the matter of division into wholesalers and retailers. Furthermore, the number of colonial merchants who carried on a large-scale business was extremely small.

The intercolonial trade of Connecticut involved largely an exchange of the local agricultural surpluses for manufactured goods, chiefly of British origin, and for East Indian goods. Both types were imported chiefly through Boston, Newport, and New York. As a whole, trade with Massachusetts bulked largest, but that with New York and Rhode Island also reached a large total. Trade with all of the other mainland colonies fell into the intermittent, small-scale pattern.

Connecticut's overseas trade possessed the distinctive character of being largely direct trade with the West Indies. This involved much trade both with the British islands, and with the French, and other foreign

islands. The latter was carried on even in wartime when it could be classified as illicit trade. The triangular trading routes, so popular with merchants in most of the other mainland colonies, never developed to any large degree in Connecticut.

The outbreak of war in April, 1775 found Connecticut far more unified, politically and psychologically, than was the case in most of the other revolting colonies. In fact, aside from the fundamental shift involved in breaking away from the Mother Country, Connecticut simply continued to function throughout the Revolution under her colonial frame of government, and with the same ruling clique. It was in the economic sphere that the war produced the most significant changes in Connecticut.

Many of the economic repercussions of the war were slow in being felt, but the State's leaders were far slower in taking action to meet the new economic problems. Except for the embargo laws, no real economic legislation was passed until after about one and one-half years of warfare. Although some governmental regulation of economic affairs had been accepted as a part of the colonial scene, it still was found difficult to impose large additional amounts of regulation in wartime, and even more difficult to enforce it. The real wonder is that so much economic control was instituted.

The effects of the war upon internal trade in the State were very marked. The supply of goods brought in from outside sources was frequently cut off or reduced, and even local sources of supply could not always be relied upon since commissaries often purchased produce directly from farmers. In general, the coastal areas suffered a moderate recession in trade, while the interior areas enjoyed a moderate boom. Hartford, Middletown, Windham, Norwich, and Litchfield all displayed an expanding

and vigorous mercantile life during the war years. In view of the serious British naval blockade of the Sound, the coastal towns commercially held their own surprisingly well until the time of the marauding expeditions of Tryon, and later, of Arnold, which caused heavy damage in Norwalk, Fairfield, New Haven, and New London.¹ Danbury, a supply depot, was the only inland town to suffer serious losses from a British incursion.

The war not only affected towns very unequally, but individuals likewise. Few men, for example, who served for long periods with the Continental Army prospered, as the pay was too small and irregular. Men with large families, unless they were wealthy, could scarcely be expected to leave their families for long periods; and therefore, they generally confined their service to short periods with the militia. Even so, Connecticut contributed one of the largest totals of men of any of the states to the Continental Army, and this affected adversely the production of foodstuffs and the course of trade.

It is very difficult to make any precise evaluation of the overall effects of the war upon economic groups as a whole, such as the merchants, manufacturers, farmers, professional men, etc. In the final analysis the effects of the war were felt by individuals. From an examination of scores of account books and other source materials one is impressed by the highly unequal economic impact of the War. The effects in Connecticut, for instance, ranged all the way from providing the basis for Jeremiah

¹In Fairfield, for example, most of the town, to the extent of two hundred and eighteen buildings, was put to the torch by Tryon's raiders. Three days later, on July 11, 1779, the same troops attacked Norwalk and again indulged in wholesale incendiarism and plundering. No less than one hundred and thirty-five dwellings, eighty-nine barns, twenty-four shops, and four mills were destroyed—a staggering loss. C. C. S. II, 143-146.

Wadsworth's vast fortune of the early national period to the complete ruin which engulfed William Beadle, the Wethersfield retailer and led him, in a fit of insanity, to destroy his family and himself.² By and large, despite depreciating currency and other serious complexities, the average Connecticut merchant more than held his own during the war as compared with the preceding two decades, or so. Unfortunately, those who adhered faithfully to the price-fixing laws fared worse, at least for short periods, than those who charged what the traffic would bear.

The overseas trade of Connecticut was greatly reduced in amount by the British blockade. Occasional voyages were made, but the risks were great and complete loss frequent. Privateering was an exciting substitute, but far less profitable, on the average, than the peacetime West Indian trade.

What chiefly prevented Connecticut from having a wartime mercantile depression was the supply business. Because of a group of favoring factors, Connecticut was able to provide an enormous amount of foodstuffs for the Continental Army, as well as its own militia, and out of this business to reap large profits. Moreover, these profits were widely distributed among thousands of farmers and hundreds of merchants in all parts of the State. The chief beneficiaries among the farmers were those with superior lands and large surpluses; and, among the merchants, those

² Beadle had built up a prosperous retailing business in Wethersfield since his settlement there in 1772. He gave no credit, and built up a large stock of goods. When the War came, he made no advances in price and accepted all currency offered to him. He laid by his money and determined to hold on to it until it should again be worth as much as when he took it. As a result the swift course of depreciation wiped out his fortune, and gradually drove him to despair and mental collapse. The dreadful mass slaughter and suicide followed on December 11, 1782. Stiles, Wethersfield, pp. 695-697.

who actively engaged in full or part-time work as commissary agents.

Most of the merchants in such wartime boom towns as Hartford and Middletown also enjoyed an unusual degree of prosperity. Moreover, taxation, although increased, failed to absorb any large part of increased wartime profits, except as currency depreciation may be considered an automatic form of taxation.

It should be remembered that Connecticut's economy still was a relatively simple one with much barter trade. Development of large-scale institutions and instruments of credit and banking lay in the future. Hence, the opportunity for making fabulous wartime profits of the Civil War or twentieth-century type simply did not exist. If the vitriolic attacks in the press against "engrossers," "monopolizers," and "gold bugs" meant anything, however, they signified a widespread feeling that some merchants and farmers did make excessive profits by unjust methods. Among the merchants the profiteers probably numbered only several score in all, a drop in the bucket compared with the vast majority who enjoyed only a moderate or no increase in real income and standard of living.

In some states the Revolution brought a profound realignment of classes and redistribution of wealth. Much of this was accomplished through confiscation of large estates of Loyalists, as in New York, and the parceling out of this land to Patriots. In Connecticut, however, no social upheaval occurred. A few Loyalists lost their estates, but the number was too small to affect importantly the total economic and social picture.

In conclusion, it is well not to overlook the great broadening in the horizons of the Connecticut merchants which occurred during the war.

It seemed as if Connecticut, for the first time, had emerged into the main currents of American economic life. Connecticut indeed had moved far from the colony of 1750 or 1760 with its small traders and their narrow interests. The necessary wartime increase in interstate economic activities had exerted a profound influence in weakening the very provincial commercial outlook of earlier, colonial days. The old order, admittedly, lingered on in the political realm for several decades more. In the realm of mercantile affairs, however, the grip of the old order had been conclusively broken, and a new order had begun to take shape. The road had been cleared for Connecticut's rapid commercial expansion during the next half-century.

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